

Managed care approaches to address unmet patient needs in multiple sclerosis (MS)

Janna Evans, PharmD¹; Michael Kobernick, MD, MS, CPE²; Denise Wolff, PharmD³; Amanda Montague, Ed.M.⁴; Terry Richardson, PharmD, BCACP⁵

BACKGROUND

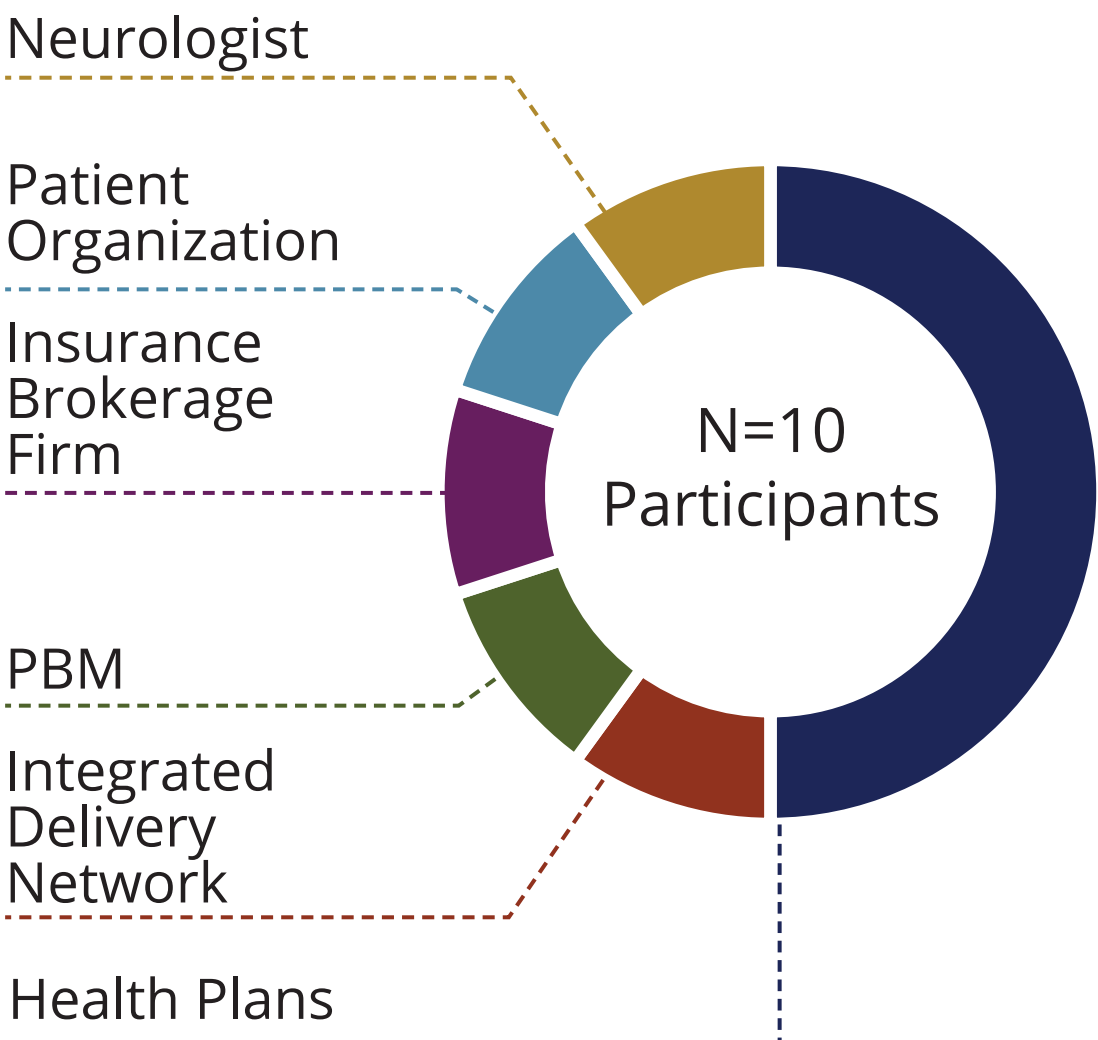
Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, immune-mediated disease characterized by substantial heterogeneity in clinical presentation, progression, and treatment response. Despite therapeutic advances, many patients experience ongoing disease activity and disability, underscoring persistent unmet needs. Managed care organizations play a critical role in improving access to effective treatments, optimizing disease management, and supporting value-based care strategies to address these gaps.

OBJECTIVE

Identify unmet patient needs in MS, review disease pathogenesis and evolving subtypes, examine advances in therapies targeting MS biology and disability, and highlight payer perspectives on treatment value, endpoints, and the move toward biologically based diagnosis.

METHODS

A multidisciplinary roundtable was convened by AMCP in December 2024, bringing together 10 participants, including representatives from health plans, integrated delivery networks, PBMs, an insurance brokerage firm, an MS patient organization, and a neurology specialist. The program included live polling to capture quantitative feedback and facilitated discussions to gather qualitative insights.

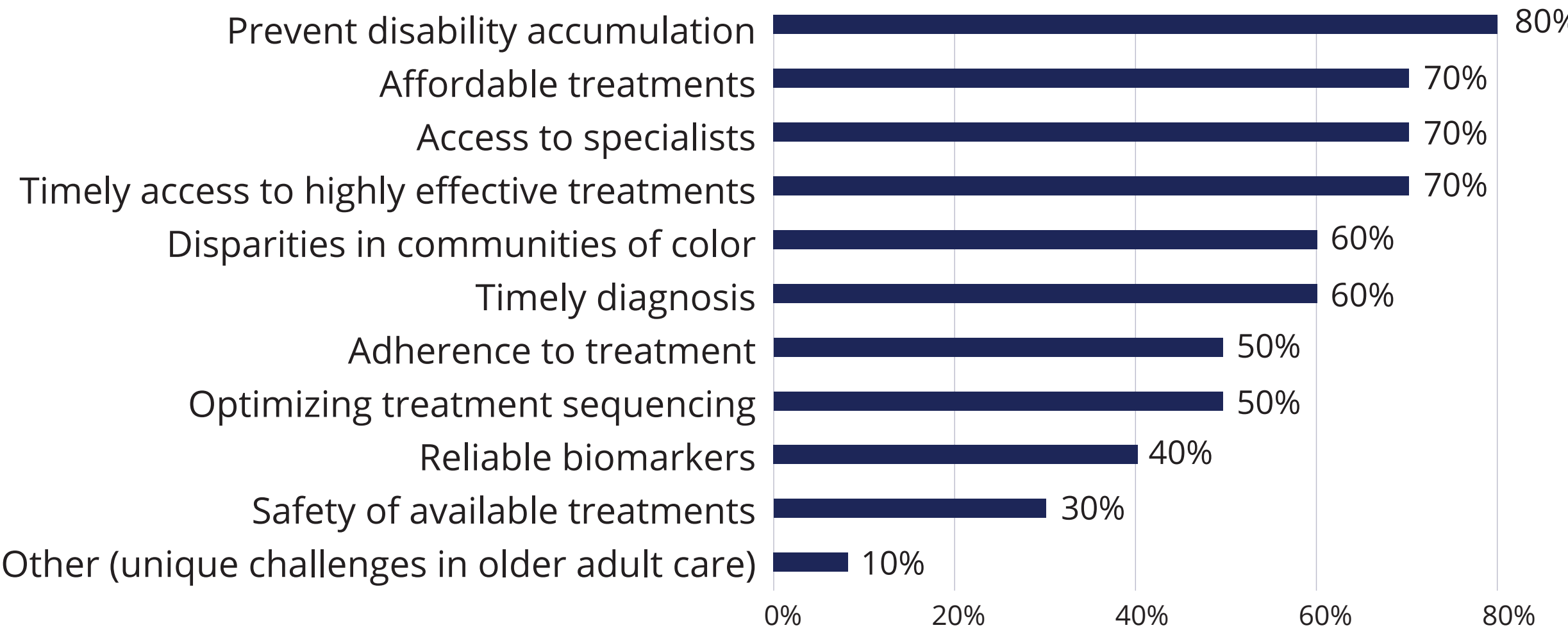


RESULTS

Polling among 10 participants identified top unmet needs in MS: preventing disability (80%); affordable treatments, access to specialists, and timely use of effective therapies (70% each); and disparities in communities of color and social determinants of health, along with timely diagnosis (60% each). All respondents agreed on the importance of addressing disability progression not related specifically to relapses and early detection, supporting use of the 2024 McDonald criteria. Participants emphasized the need for real-world evidence, updated guidelines, and early use of high-efficacy disease-modifying therapy (DMT). Key challenges included care fragmentation, lack of comparative data, need for standardized diagnostics and ICD-10 codes, and improved budget predictability tools. Participants expressed cautious optimism about Bruton’s tyrosine kinase (BTK) inhibitors, viewing them as a novel approach with potential to address unmet needs, particularly in progressive MS.

“Time is brain; we need earlier diagnosis and early effective treatment.” – Neurologist Participant

Initial Managed Care Perspectives on the Greatest Unmet Needs in MS



Polling Q: What do you currently see as being the greatest unmet need in MS? (select all that apply); n=10

Desired data in MS to better inform managed care strategies

- Payers would like to understand both short-term (relapse control) and long-term (disability prevention) impact of treatments for MS
- Concerns about the tolerability and safety profile of MS therapies over extended periods remain, emphasizing the importance of post-marketing surveillance and real-world evidence (RWE) studies

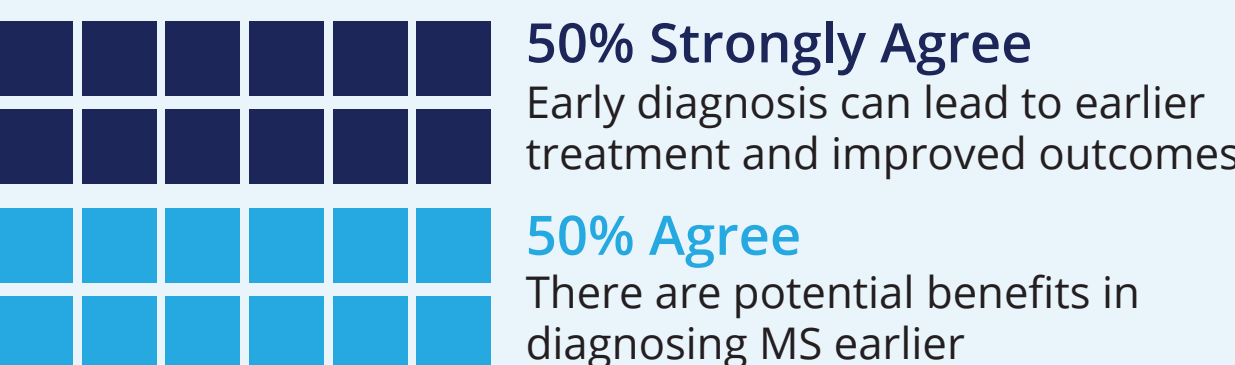
There was strong consensus amongst payers about the importance of non-relapse-related mechanisms of disability progression in MS.



Polling Q: To what extent do you agree that progressive accumulation of disability in MS can occur independently of relapse activity and/or macroscopic MRI findings, even from the early stages of the disease? n=10

*No panelist selected “Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Other” responses for either polling question.

Payers recognize the importance of early detection and effective treatment in managing MS and will likely welcome the use of the 2024 revised McDonald diagnostic criteria.



Polling Q: The revised McDonald diagnostic criteria may allow MS diagnoses before patients show symptoms. Which of the following best reflects your initial response to the updated criteria? n=10

*No panelist selected “Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Other” responses for either polling question.

Polling Q: What endpoints/outcomes would you like to see reported in MS clinical trials or RWE to better inform managed care strategies? n=10

Response	Percent Response
Annualized relapse rate	90%
Comparative effectiveness of emerging therapies	70%
Disability progression/status	90%
Healthcare utilization and associated costs	70%
Long-term safety and side effects	80%
MRI outcomes	70%
Patient-reported outcomes	50%
Population-specific outcomes (e.g., race, gender)	30%

CONCLUSIONS

These AMCP Market Insights program findings underscore the need for earlier diagnosis, timely access to high-efficacy therapies, and updated guidelines to improve MS outcomes. Payer and clinical stakeholders expressed cautious optimism about emerging therapies such as BTK inhibitors. Collaborative, evidence-based approaches will be essential for managed care organizations to address persistent unmet needs and enhance care for individuals living with MS.

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