



2025 Specialty Pharmacy Trends Report

Industry Pressures Are Brewing

As pharmacies navigate tighter reimbursement models, limited staffing, and emerging complex therapies, small inefficiencies create big ripple effects.

Patients are left waiting, care teams are overwhelmed, and growth becomes harder to sustain. Understanding these bottlenecks is key to transforming pharmacy operations from reactive to proactive – and identifying where smarter tools can make the biggest impact.

To better assess the needs and challenges pharmacies face, Inovalon surveyed nearly 200 pharmacy leaders, mainly in clinical (54%), operational (28%), and financial (9%) roles.

What Is Slowing Progress?

1. Time to therapy is too slow

Nearly half (46%) of respondents said patients often wait seven days or more to begin treatment. These delays erode patient trust and limit therapy success rates. They stem from scattered systems, back-and-forth communication, and inefficient prior authorization processes.

2. Manual processes still rule

Two-thirds of pharmacy staff are still manually entering patient data at least 50% of the time – an enormous drain on productivity. Slow automation adoption highlights a clear opportunity to modernize and improve efficiency.

3. Eligibility is a mystery

Providers and patients share the same frustrations: There's limited visibility into financial responsibility and insurance coverage at the start of care. This lack of transparency slows down benefit verification and leads to repetitive workflows.

4. Compliance is getting more complex

Pharmacies are juggling strict reporting requirements, limited drug distribution (LDD) program rules, and payer demands – all while preparing for audits. The lack of centralized tracking and documentation tools makes this a growing challenge.

5. Too many systems, not enough focus

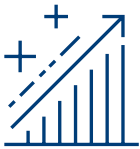
Nearly half (48%) of respondents said they rely on more than six systems to manage daily pharmacy tasks, a quarter of whom are juggling 10 or more. Constantly switching between platforms creates friction, distractions, and cognitive overload that slows down already burdened workflows.



What Pharmacists Want Most

Not surprisingly, the ability to grow and work more efficiently topped the wish list of most respondents.

Top goals:



82% want to increase prescription volume



46% want to improve operational efficiency



45% want access to more payer contracts and networks

Pharmacy professionals also outlined specific actions that would support those goals:

Improve access and transparency

- Faster, clearer access to cost and insurance data at the start of care
- Better visibility into financial performance and predictive analytics for patient outcomes

Streamline core workflows

- Seamless benefit verification and prior authorization workflows to speed up time to therapy

Reduce staff burnout and boost clinical impact

- Automated tools that cut down on manual data entry and repetitive administrative tasks
- Workflow support that empowers pharmacists to operate at the top of their license – including support for patient education, medication management, and adherence monitoring

Meet stakeholder demands with confidence

- Enhanced reporting capabilities to satisfy complex manufacturer and payer requirements, especially for LDD and specialty drug programs



Where Does Innovation Stand?

Currently, **only 3% of participants** have fully automated systems. The other 97% continue to use manual entry for at least some tasks, and a staggering **66% manually enter data** at least half the time.

Pharmacists are stuck between what they know isn't working now, and the faster, more automated workflows they want. They know the future is digitally enabled, intelligent, and patient-centered. The top areas they're excited about include:

- AI-powered benefit verification and prior authorization tools that eliminate bottlenecks
- Workflow automation to cut down on manual data entry
- Tools that shorten time to therapy while meeting compliance and audit requirements
- Expanded reporting and visualization capabilities for each essential function, including operational, clinical, compliance, financial, and foundational teams

Prepare for the Future of Pharmacy Today

Specialty pharmacies are changing – and so are the expectations. The demand for innovation is loud and clear, and the path forward will be shaped by the tools that can simplify complexity without sacrificing care quality. This report offers a glimpse into where pharmacies are today, and where they're hoping to go next.

[Take the first step](#) toward smarter pharmacy operations. Our experts can help you cut manual work, speed time to therapy, and stay ahead of compliance demands. When you're ready, schedule a conversation with our team to get started.

[Request a Demo](#)



3% of survey participants have fully automated systems



66% of pharmacists manually enter data at least half of the time

About us

Inovalon is a leading provider of cloud-based SaaS solutions empowering data-driven healthcare. The Inovalon ONE® Platform brings together national-scale connectivity, real-time primary source data access, and advanced analytics into a sophisticated cloud-based platform empowering improved outcomes and economics across the healthcare ecosystem. The company's analytics and capabilities are used by over 50,000 active, licensed customers.

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