COVID-19 How Your Pharmacy Can Help

For the past few weeks, we're sure you have been bombarded with coronavirus news. We've all become familiar with social distancing, hand sanitizer recipes, toilet paper shortages, and changes to everything from sports schedules, schools closing, to restaurant hours. These are challenging times not only for your pharmacy and staff but also for your patients.

What the world needs right now is reassurance. Reassurance that we can take necessary steps to move past this pandemic and get back to our daily routines. In the meantime, here are some steps your pharmacy can implement in order to offer patients peace of mind and most importantly, reassurance.

Offer Free Delivery & Curbside Services

Majority of independents have always offered free delivery services and there is no time like the present to make this well known. Notify your patients, especially those 65+, that your pharmacy can drop off medications and OTC items to their home free of charge.

For curbside service, pharmacies should have a specific parking spot they can utilize so they know when a patient has arrived to pick up their prescriptions. If feasible, make sure to ask in advance the color and make/model of their car, and if they need any OTC items so your staff can be as efficient as possible. To make transactions even more seamless, talk with your point-of-sale vendor about acquiring a mobile POS tool that enables curbside transactions.

Also, it is important to make sure both your delivery drivers and curbside staff are practicing good hygiene and are protected as much as possible when encountering patients by wearing gloves and surgical masks as well as washing their hands frequently (cue: favorite 20 second lyrics).

Compound Hand Sanitizer

The FDA announced that they will take no enforcement action against licensed professionals, like pharmacists, who make and sell hand sanitizer as long as they use high-quality ingredients and follow a recipe laid out by the FDA. Take this opportunity to let your community know you are offering this service. Some pharmacies are giving them away for free or charging a very small fee. The recipe calls for alcohol (ethanol) (80% v/v) or isopropyl alcohol (75% v/v), glycerol (1.45%

v/v), hydrogen peroxide (0.125% v/v) and sterile distilled water or boiled cold water. Keystone pharmacies that are considering buying alcohol in bulk should follow this process and purchase directly from in-state or out of state distillers.

Post Signage & Use Social Media

Take this opportunity to share tips on how to stay healthy. Education at this stage is crucial, both for those patients visiting your pharmacy or those choosing to stay away or under quarantine. Have signage in place for those who visit your pharmacy listing coronavirus information and symptoms, services you can offer to prevent infection, and what happens if customers are exposed. Social media is also a great tool to keep your patients engaged. Post handwashing tips and encourage patients to share what they are doing to stay healthy and virus free.

To save time, Keystone has created a COVID-19 toolkit that includes bag stuffers, letters, posters, social media posts, and one-pagers from the CDC you can easily download. The Word documents can be edited and personalized for your pharmacy.

Utilize Mobile Refill Apps & Technology

Communication with your patients is still key. Mobile Apps allow patients to submit their refills virtually and check the status when their prescription is ready. Outbound calling and two-way secure messaging campaigns can be implemented to let patients know if your store is adjusting hours, receiving shipments of emergency supplies, or experiencing delays with medications. You can also answer questions from patients via text or email and connect with them by checking in on their health or remind them to take their medications.

Send Letters to the Trump Administration

More than ever pharmacies need the support of the Trump Administration so they can continue to provide Americans with daily pharmaceutical and health care needs during this pandemic. In order to continue to provide essential pharmaceutical services and care to Americans, pharmacies need to implore the Task Force and Administration to take the following actions:

- Suspend all Medicare Part D pharmacy DIR fees immediately for 2020.
- Provide COVID-19 test kits and protective equipment to community pharmacists.
- Waive patient signature and other home delivery verification requirements.
- Waive early refill requirements for maintenance medications.
- Authorize pharmacists to compound medications undergoing drug shortages.

- Suspend pharmacy network restrictions to allow any willing pharmacy to dispense medications to people in underserved areas.
- Provide unsecured credit to pharmacies to ensure they have the cash to pay their staff, rent, inventory suppliers, and other costs.

To assist, Keystone has created a template letter that you can [download](#), customize for your pharmacy, and take action on immediately.

Curfew Identification

In the event your local community, city or county places curfews on hours of operation by non-essential businesses, it is important that you and your pharmacy staff have appropriate identification or a letter documenting employment at your pharmacy to show law enforcement. Please consider creating a letter for your employees on pharmacy letterhead that clearly identifies, by name, that your employees work at your pharmacy. This action may curtail an uncomfortable situation for you and your employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Closing Thoughts

The Coronavirus can be a challenge for us all. We trust that all of us are up for that challenge. We'll have to help one another along, so don't be afraid to ask. Keystone hopes your pharmacy can benefit from these steps in order to provide the reassurance your patients need.

To learn more about how we can assist your pharmacy and patients during this time, please connect with your Keystone Sales Rep or email [info@kpparx.com.](mailto:info@kpparx.com) We can get through this together.