

Improving Medication Adherence with Your Patients



2021 is upon us, and our member pharmacies are continually looking for ways to improve their standings, profits, and pharmacy's ability to thrive and grow. Our members can increase their chances for success by placing a good portion of time and energy into patient adherence.

In addition to readmission and poor patient outcomes, medication non-adherence is acknowledged as a reason behind failure rates when treating chronic conditions and adverse medication reactions. These negative consequences can be critical drivers to escalating healthcare costs – which also means it can be the perfect opportunity for independent pharmacies to put their knowledge and expertise to work, securing their ability to grow.

As a community pharmacy, you are accessible, and you are the expert. You also have the stage to guide your customers' ability to understand their medications and how they work to treat them and know how to take those medications effectively. Here are a few tips which can help you do just that:

1. Educate Patients

Finishing a course of drugs is crucial to any medication's effectiveness. Patients need to be made aware of all the positive and negative side-effects. They need to be encouraged to complete their medication, even if they feel better, think the medication is no longer necessary, or even if they don't see/feel any change while taking the medication. Providers typically spend less than a minute educating patients about medications. Consider increasing this investment. Doing so can be quite beneficial for your pharmacy. From helping your patients feel more confident that their

medication is working correctly to providing an extra, patient-focused service to your customers – education increases a patient's chances for successful medication adherence.

2. Build Patient Relationships

For every annual visit to a primary care physician, patients will see their pharmacists dozens of times. This presents another fantastic opportunity for pharmacists and pharmacy staff to build stronger relationships with their customers. By making yourself available to your patients outside of the usual medication interactions, you're increasing the trust level a patient has in your organization – which can ultimately lead to a patient opening up about issues and concerns, leading to future medication adherence issues.

3. Become Familiar with Technological Supports

From smartphone apps, digital pillboxes, and adherence packaging, having a solid knowledge of these various adherence tools and how they work to impact adherence is can be an invaluable resource for improving medication adherence in patients. Knowing your customer – which is a beneficial side effect of step 2 above, can help you understand their preferences. Some patients may love the idea of using their smartphones, while others may be more inclined to manual tools, such as calendars and pillboxes. This step requires a bit of finesse – it's not a blanket tool, but you can customize it based on the patient and your individual pharmacy's needs. However, by investing in this step, you're continuing to build the relationships and trust necessary to retain customer satisfaction and achieve positive outcomes for your patients.

4. Make Time to Educate and Engage Staff

An educated, efficient team will benefit the company, its referrers, and the customers they serve. By engaging the entire staff, your organization will be laying the groundwork to quickly identify trends in patient non-adherence and the possible warning signs that could lead to a future non-adherence issue. When the entire team considers themselves a knowledgeable, valued member of your team, that same team is investing itself in the customer and the organization's performance.

Closing Thoughts

A brand-new year, full of possibilities, awaits. Now is the time to begin working on skills, increasing knowledge, and building the relationships which will position your pharmacy as a pivotal member of the community it serves. Placing focus on this area can have a lasting and positive impact on the patient, increase customer loyalty, and ensure future pharmacy revenue.

Not sure where to start? Through our partnership with Aspire Health, Keystone has the solutions to help your pharmacy and patients be successful with medication adherence. To learn more, please connect with your Keystone Business Consultant via email at info@kpparx.com.