



Let Them Know Where You Stand

By Michael F. Conlan

Have you ever considered providing information to patients about legislative or policy issues that affect both your business and their care, like AMP or PBMs, but weren't sure if it was appropriate? Afraid of offending patients/customers or their politics?

Well, the results of an exclusive public opinion survey done for community pharmacy should put those concerns to rest. Speak up, the patients don't mind. And, they trust you.

Some 83 percent of those polled responded affirmatively that it would be "appropriate...if your pharmacist shared information with you about a policy or legislative issue related to your pharmacy care." (That's up from 75 percent in a similar poll last year.) Only 14 percent said it would be "inappropriate."

In fact, 46 percent said they would rather hear about pharmacy-related legislation from their pharmacist than their legislator (27 percent). Some 66 percent gave the pharmacists "who work at a community or independent pharmacy in your neighborhood" a 66 percent score for "high trustworthiness." On a 1-5 scale, 39 percent judged those pharmacists "extremely trustworthy."

The preferred method of receiving information from pharmacists? Flyers in the prescription bag (bag stuffers) were cited by 52 percent of the respondents, followed by "a direct conversation" with the pharmacist (26 percent), "materials displayed in the pharmacy" (20 percent), "an Internet site" (12 percent), and "an e-mail to you" (11 percent). [Totals exceed 100 percent because of multiple responses.]

The survey also found that nearly 60 percent

of those surveyed said they were "interested" in visiting "a kiosk or booth located in your pharmacy that contained information about the various legislative issues related to your pharmacy care, as well as example letters and e-mails to send to your elected officials about your opinions on those issues."

Some 83 percent *of those polled* responded *affirmatively* that it would be "*appropriate... if your pharmacist shared information with you about a policy or legislative issue related to your pharmacy care.*"

So, what topics should you consider? Some 83 percent of respondents found it unfair that "PBMs and prescription drug plans keep money as long as possible, allowing them to earn interest on it, while pharmacies must continue to provide their services and prescription drugs upfront to patients even though they haven't been paid." The survey also found 83 percent support "new legislation in Congress to ensure pharmacies providing Medicare Part D patients are reimbursed by the government within 14 days."

In addition, the survey found 78 percent thought it was unfair that "under the new rule, pharmacies that participate in the Medicaid program would have to sell generic drugs at a loss." In addition, the survey found 74 percent support legislation that would "base pharmacist reimbursement on the price the pharmacy actually paid for the drugs."

The telephone survey of 1,000 adults was conducted for the Coalition for Community Pharmacy Action by the polling company(tm), inc./WomanTrend. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percent. **ap**

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