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News

Pharma drops ball in pharmacy 4/11/2016

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Pharma companies are missing an opportunity by not putting more focus on community pharmacy particularly as drugs are becoming more specialised and, in some cases, don't actually make it onto the PBS.

Former Pharmacy Guild national president Kos Sclavos and his partner in pharmacy consultancy Sinapse, Con Tangalakis say this is just one "disconnect" in pharma's education and marketing efforts - and they're aiming to change those attitudes with a series of industry-oriented roadshows over the coming months.

Mr Tangalakis says pharma has historically focused heavily on doctors, who are generating the prescriptions, but "capturing the prescription at the dispensing level has always been someone else's problem," he said.

He believes the pharmaceutical industry has put community pharmacy in the "too hard" basket because of simple accessibility issues like the average pharmacist being too busy.

But Mr Sclavos says with the changing health landscape with more medicines becoming more targeted and specialised, IT services such as pharmacy locaters can help consumers to know where to go for a product and help them with compliance.

And if it becomes apparent that a drug might not get PBS-listing, then making sure that patients know how and where to access private medications becomes even more important.

"Ultimately it's very much about trying to educate them (pharma) on the role that the pharmacist has to play in making sure that products are available and appropriately messaged.

"Part of that includes proper remuneration, as it should. The pharmacist has a significant role in making sure the patient takes the medicine and be sure about how to take it," he said.

With the government encouraging people to get out of hospital "the pharmacist will be involved in key areas of drug policy where they're helping reduce drug costs," Mr Sclavos predicts.

He said for a pharma company, engagement with pharmacy means programs and services where the pharmacist can improve product compliance "where there's an upside for you and an upside for the pharmacist and, most importantly, there's an upside for the patient".

David Rowley

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