

Senior Friendly Pharmacy- Design, Caregiver Support & ADL Supplies

Readily accessible senior care services and supplies encourage elder patients and their caregivers to patronize pharmacies that offer them tools to age in place in their community.

While medication management services are a staple of many high-performing independent community pharmacies, this revenue piece focuses on store design, caregiver support and aids to assist our elderly in activities of daily living (ADL).

With 10,000 baby boomers turning 65 every day and many new “retirees” taking care of parents who live well into their 80s, it is incumbent upon community pharmacists to design and layout their pharmacy so that the shopping experience is a pleasant one.

Make sure you consider the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) when setting up your business. ADA disabilities include both mental and physical medical conditions. While ADA does is not specifically directed at seniors, it makes good business sense to make sure the location is handicap accessible with aisles at least 5ft wide. Do not clutter up the aisles with displays that would impede the traffic flow. Registers can or should have a pull out top for those in a wheelchair. The store should be well lit. Doors should open easy. Magnifying glasses on a chain every 8 to 12ft of shelving is a nice touch. Floor needs to be smooth, no tile. The prescription counter should be within 25 steps from door. Make sure the waiting area has at least two chairs with arms. Limit background music speakers near registers, pickup and drop off areas. If music is piped in it should be appropriate for expected age group and drive up, delivery or curbside pickup is a must. Behind the counter, unit dose compliance packaging and large font labels are beneficial. Pharmacists should pay special attention to caregivers that sacrifice their time and health for loved ones.

Unpaid family caregiving is an activity that knows no bounds. It cuts across all Ages, genders, races/ ethnicities, and relationship types. Caregiving experiences can be easy to manage, and at the same time, challenging and stressful. Caregiver stress is a condition of exhaustion, anger, rage, or guilt that results from unrelieved caring for a chronically ill dependent. Typical symptoms of the caregiver include fatigue, insomnia, stomach complaints, with the most common symptom being depression. Underserved caregivers cite need for education among chief concerns.

Pharmacists can educate caregivers:

1. To manage their emotions, they feel so alone at times
2. To find time for themselves, otherwise the stress may kill them
3. To balance work, care giving, and physical health
4. To manage incontinence, they are confused with all the choices
5. To properly lift patients, saving their aching back

6. To talk with Physicians and not be afraid of asking questions
7. To assist the family in choosing senior living services beyond the home
8. To provide appropriate end of life options for the family
9. To find government financial aid and money management options
10. To correctly manage a patients medications, too many doses have already been missed

Caregivers spend much of their day assisting the elderly in achieving their Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). ADLs are basic self-care tasks, akin to the kinds of skills that people usually learn in early childhood. They include the following:

- Feeding
- Toileting
- Selecting proper attire
- Grooming
- Maintaining continence
- Putting on clothes
- Bathing
- Walking and transferring (such as moving from bed to wheelchair)

Many older people experience problems in daily living because of chronic illnesses or health-related disabilities. Those difficulties restrict their ability to perform self-care. The pharmacy should be well stocked with supplies to help the elderly successfully engage in ADLs.

A senior friendly community pharmacy should increase the number of elder care patients and caregivers visiting. Loyal patrons such as these can increase your margins.

Resources

- <http://www.medicare.gov/campaigns/caregiver/caregiver-resource-kit.html>
- <http://www.seniorcaresociety.com/article/activities-of-daily-living-checklist.html>
- <http://us.eisai.com/about-eisai-inc/caring-help-others-manual>
- <http://caregiveraction.org/family-caregiver-toolbox>
- <http://www.ada.gov/>
- <http://www.ncpanet.org/solutions/front-end-overhaul>
- <http://aplaceformom.com>

Associations

- <http://www.healthinaging.org/>
- <http://www.caregivered.org/>
- <http://www.alzfdn.org/>
- <http://www.caregiving.org/>
- <http://www.aarp.org/>

Pharmaceutical Manufacturers

- Pfizer/Johnson & Johnson
- Eli Lilly
- Eisai Co.