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The Role of Pharmacist: Caring for Ophthalmologic Conditions

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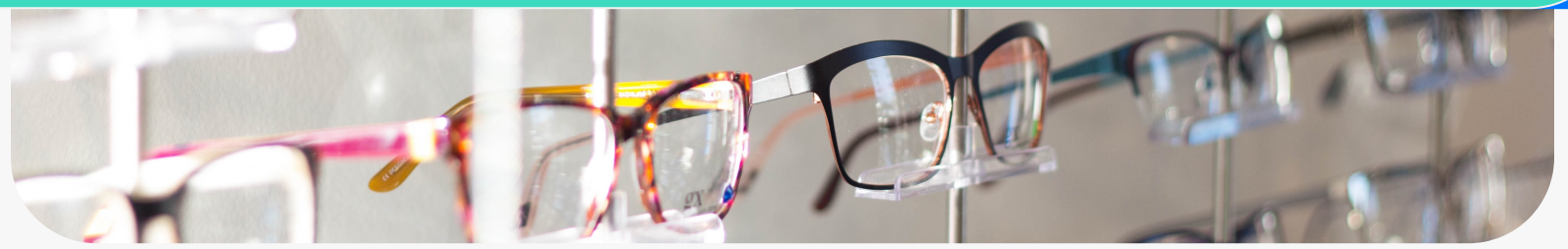


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Pharmacists have a great opportunity to support providers in caring for patients with ophthalmologic conditions. They can do this most powerfully by supporting medication adherence in those patients with eye conditions.

In **the Optometry Times**, Thomas Sullivan, MD, wrote, “One-fourth of new RXs are never filled—and even when filled, up to 50 percent of patients with chronic conditions fail to take their medications as prescribed. These statistics reflect the situation before COVID-19 led to social distancing and stay-at-home orders that may be making the situation worse.”

This dire situation is especially critical in ophthalmology, which is a specialty heavily reliant on medication such as eye drops in order to treat various disease states of the eye. “The most common trend we have seen around neglected medication is for chronic eye conditions,” stated Medly Pharmacy’s Chief Compliance Officer Jitu Patel. “In these scenarios, if a digital pharmacy has always-on pharmacist support, the pharmacy can reach out directly to the doctor and coordinate delivery that can be tracked by both parties until it reaches the patient’s door.”

High cost is one reason why patients do not adhere to their medication regimen. Luckily, Medly Pharmacy provides financial assistance to patients in the form of manufacturers’ programs and coupons so that patients are always provided with the lowest possible price for their medications. .

Another reason is a lack of understanding of disease states. Especially now, with the nation still in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, patients have been encouraged to stay home and limit any trips outside, including any for nonessential medical care. That means patients have less face time with the physicians who are able to educate them about the therapies they have been prescribed.

Pharmacists can step in to fill this gap by making sure patients understand everything they need about the medication they are being prescribed, how to take their medication and why doing so is important. Medly Pharmacy provides on-call 24/7 pharmacy support from real pharmacists for exactly this reason.

Finally, patients forget to pick up their prescriptions or delay doing so. This is where patronizing a pharmacy that offers delivery is so important. Medly Pharmacy offers free same-day delivery in New York City, Philadelphia, Miami, and more, with more cities on the way.

Now that people are discouraged from leaving the home, the ability to have medication delivered to one’s house is more important than ever. Patients don’t need to worry about a trip to the pharmacy when the pharmacy comes to them instead.

Community pharmacists are already participants in ophthalmology education to patients, as one study pointed out. “The pharmacist and his staff are active players in providing advice on ocular diseases and taking care of patients. Moreover, pharmacists have to manage ocular therapeutics, urgent symptoms, and chronic diseases,” **stated** the study. However, the study concluded that further continuing education for pharmacists was needed.

With the right communication and tools, pharmacists are able to support both patients and providers at either end of managing ophthalmologic conditions.

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