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UPGRADING PRACTICE OF COMMUNITY PHARMACY IN INDIA

My pharmacy journey

I moved to Australia to pursue my Master's degree and planned to return to India after gaining some work experience in the field of Pharmacy Informatics. I completed my Masters in Health Information Management from University of Sydney and Graduate Certificate in Information Technology from the University of South Australia in Adelaide. As I began my job search, I became aware that I need to have local Pharmacy Operations experience before I could be considered for the informatics job that I was seeking. So, I cleared my Pharmacy Licensure Exam in Australia after finishing my Pharmacy Internship in Soul Pattinson Retail Pharmacy in Darwin in NT, Australia. During this process, I developed an interest in pharmacy practice - especially in hospital pharmacy and clinical pharmacy. I started my first job as Chief Pharmacist in the Regional Base Hospital at Whyalla and was responsible for managing the whole pharmacy department. After my tenure as Chief Pharmacist, I moved to Maryborough in Queensland to start my career as Clinical Pharmacist, by this time my wife Sridevi cleared her license exam and qualified to practice pharmacy in Australia. After 3 years as Clinical Pharmacist - I looked

for a career change that would allow me to pursue my interest in Pharmacy Informatics. Following a short stay in India to work as Implementation Lead and Consultant in OHUM Healthcare Solutions and Deloitte India, I returned to Australia and gained additional real life Pharmacy Informatics experience working in Queensland Health as Senior Application Specialist in Pharmacy Informatics. After 17 years, I decided to return to India to take care of my elderly parents.

Birth of MedAux pharmacy

While I had job offers from Middle East as well as India, I decided to embark on my own entrepreneurial journey of starting MedAux Pharmacy. While India is considered the "Pharmacy of the World" based on its manufacturing strength and its products used all over the world - but for Indian citizens usage of the same pharmaceuticals underlies multiple pain points. When a patient goes to a doctor, he/she receives a prescription which can be with illegible handwriting that couldn't be understood by the patient. At the Pharmacy, a pharmacy staff sells the medication as though it is 'grocery shop', without any counselling. Doctors seldom get a chance to explain the medication they are prescribing to the patient. Therefore, I wanted to help the patients in India by educating them about the medication they are taking and how to take them appropriately. This prompted me to start a Community Pharmacy that was similar to the ones operating in developed countries. With a decade long experience as Pharmacist in Australia - I took up the challenge of setting up a modern community pharmacy in India.

Services provided at MedAux pharmacy

- We dispense the medication with a personalized labeling which includes the Name of the Medication, Batch # , Expiry Date, Quantity and Price of the medication, Instruction for taking the



medicine, Name of the customer, Name of the Pharmacist and Name of the doctor who prescribed it. We also stick cautionary or ancillary labels based on the medicines dispensed which help the customers to clearly understand the precautions and expected side effects while taking these medicines.

- We counsel the patient on the medical condition, why the doctor has prescribed the medication, the common side effects of the medication and how to manage them and when to report it to doctors.
- We perform Medication Management Review for customers and if there are any discrepancies, we communicate those to their doctors either orally or by a written report on the issues found and how to mitigate them.
- We share 'Medication Profile' with our customers, so that even if they see a new doctor or in an emergency - they have list of their medications and allergies handy.
- We also provide 'Dose Help' system for elderly customers where we pack their medications in an 'Air Tight' weekly dose pack along with a printed med profile which identifies the medication that is consumed daily.
- We measure patient's blood pressure and provide guidance on how to manage it appropriately with medications and life-style modifications.
- We measure patient's blood sugar as appropriate and help manage symptoms of hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia.
- We have a 'Quit Smoking Program' where we help customers in choosing appropriate plan to quit smoking - once they have the will to do it.

- We guide our patients in their weight management endeavours to lose their weight, based on BMI.

Our journey so far

First step in starting MedAux involved developing an in-house software functionality to support our pharmacy operation. This took about an year. Phase I of implementation and developing the reports through MIS for multi - store functionality took another 6 months. We opened the store on 27th April 2020, during the peak of Covid wave in India. Therefore, we had a slow pick up and only had couple of customers on Day 1. Now at the end of January 2023, we have about 6000+ customers in our customer database, of which at least 4000 are returning customers. Positive word of mouth recommendation by customers has resulted in addition of at least 2 to 3 new customer each day, to utilize and benefit from the unique pharmacy services offered by our pharmacy in India.



MedAux Pharmacy, Hyderabad, India

Future outlook and expectations from young pharmacist in India

Now that our software is fully functional and we have had couple of years of experience in operating our Pharmacy that meets the standards of developed countries, we are looking forward to the select group of young



Indian pharmacy graduates - who want to use their knowledge to serve their customers achieve optimum therapeutic outcomes and have entrepreneurial interest. We would love to train them in Clinical Pharmacy Practice in a retail pharmacy set up where 80% of the Indian population need help with their day to day medications and create a paradigm shift in the way retail pharmacy is practiced in India.

Patient Testimonials

Our mission is to help our customers get best outcomes from their proposed treatment plan, this is evident from multiple positive testimonials posted at our website. Customers love our Pharmacy services - as it helps them to understand both their disease and medications better, empowering them to be a partner in managing their condition.

Actual patient testimonials can be viewed by clicking the following link:

<https://www.medauxpharmacy.com/testimonials>