

Speaker 1: Welcome to the Pharmacy Marketing Simplified Podcast. Part of the pharmacy podcast network. Pharmacy marketing simplified focuses on easy and proven marketing depths from pharmacy owners in industry experts to leverage in your Independent pharmacy business. This podcast is all about pharmacy marketing and how to be successful in today's competitive market place.

Nicolle McClure: This is Nicolle McClure, President of GRX Marketing and host of the Pharmacy Marketing Simplified Podcast, which is part of the pharmacy podcast network.

Today we are bringing you a special podcast series in conjunction with Cardinal Health. I am thrilled to be speaking to today's guest Betsy Walker, who is the director of community relations at Cardinal Health, and she will be discussing the Generation Rx program.

Betsy, welcome to the show.

Betsy Walker: Hi. Thank you Nicolle.

Nicolle McClure: Before we get started talking about the program, can you tell our listeners a little about yourself and your connection with helping pharmacy owners?

Betsy Walker: Sure. So I have been with Cardinal Health for fourteen years in a variety of different roles, actually used to work directly with retail independent pharmacists years ago when I was in the independent sales organization. But for the last five and a half years I have been in our community relations team and my main focus is on our Generation RX program.

So Cardinal Health and our philanthropic work within the Cardinal Health Foundation, a significant part of what we focus on is the public health issue of prescription drug misuse.

So starting in 2009 we began partnering with the Ohio State University College of Pharmacy on Generation Rx and together in partnership with Ohio State and many others, we bring about prevention education and a really strong community focus on engaging all community members around medication safety and teaching them about prescription drug misuse prevention.

So the retail independent pharmacists have been our number one ally in terms of taking the Generation RX education and connecting that back into their communities. So they have been the very best champions - or advocates, ambassadors, whatever you want to call it - across the country, really since 2009 when Cardinal Health Foundation began partnering on the program and taking it to a national level.

And so the retail independent pharmacists we have always believed are the most accessible health care professionals and I would say medication safety is such a critical topic for them to be discussing and such expertise in their area, it

is a very natural fit for retail independent pharmacists to bring medication safety education, not only to their patients but into the community as well.

Nicolle McClure: And, you know, I am familiar with Generation RX and I think one component of it that I have always liked is trying to reach the younger kids.

Betsy Walker: Yes.

Nicolle McClure: Through, I know you guys offer a service or a program for elementary school kids and middle school and high school students and that message varies a little depending on the age group but overall the same of you know, why it is important to not abuse drugs

I guess, can you touch on a little bit – why is it important to try to talk that younger demographic instead of waiting until you are an adult and you are taking medications?

Betsy Walker: Absolutely and I am so glad to hear that you think that the education for elementary school and the other kids is important. That is why we created the education is because there was a need. So we focus on from elementary school students to older adults and everyone in between. And the main reason we want education to be at such a young audience is that medication is in all of our homes.

So Generation RX is about: Medication safety, safe medication practices for life and focusing on preventing misuse. So for elementary school students, for younger students, it is really introducing them to what medicine is. We talk about what a pharmacist does, we talk about what a doctor does and how the two work together. So what is a prescription? These children have medication in their home in some way, shape or form whether it be a prescription or an over the counter or a vitamin and so it is really introducing them to the concept of it and around safety. There are key topics or key messages around only taking medicine from a trusted adult. A child should not be taking medicine by themselves.

And so the medicine is in the home and we thought it was really important to focus the education around medication safety. For the younger audience for elementary school, it is all learning through games and activities. It is very hands on. It is meant to be for small group sessions. That's really the intended audience for all of Generation RX, it's not ideal for a large auditorium type of setting because it's interactive learning through games and activities. In small groups, they are learning about what is medication safety? What does a pharmacist do? What does a prescription label look like? They are actually using basic mathematics to work through some simple addition, subtraction and multiplication and whatnot. Things that a pharmacist would do when trying to dispense a prescription and reading a label. They are learning about the difference between candy and medicine which at times look very similar and

they are just learning about how important it is to have a trusted adult and to only take medication under the supervision of a trusted adult.

So the basis of the education at that age it is not focused on misuse conversation. There is no conversation around prescription drug misuse or addiction or dependency. It is really around introducing them to medication safety.

Nicolle McClure: Which is a great approach I think because otherwise that type of messaging would probably at that younger level go over their heads.

Betsy Walker: Yes.

Nicolle McClure: Do you have any results that you can share with us kind of that you have seen over the last couple of years since during the program?

Betsy Walker: Yeah. We know very conservatively that we have directly educated using the Generation RX resources over a million Americans. We know it is in every state in the country. We know that the resources, actually very much thanks to the retail independent pharmacists, they are used in every state in the country and so through post-test evaluation – so after students and adults have been through the education, whether it be one time or multiple education touchpoints with Generation RX – they are letting us know about their knowledge change. So what have they learned about medication safety and how is that going to change their behavior? What is their intent to change behavior? And so those results are pretty incredible. They're, you know, mid to high 90%, 95% of younger children or – I don't have the exact statistics in front of me right now but it's a very high percentage of, they have learned things about not sharing medication, they have learned to ask for permission for younger students or what not. And then for those who would have misbehavior with medication, their intent to change their behavior after they have learned about proper medication safety. All of those results have been very positive.

Nicolle McClure: Awesome. So you know if one of the independent pharmacy owners listening to the podcast and you know maybe they have heard about Generation Rx but haven't taken that step to get involved. What would you say to them, why is it important to be involved in the program? Not only that as well but also doing like drug take back days and things like that.

Betsy Walker: Yeah. Absolutely, so the retail Independent pharmacist is the perfectly positioned community business owner to engage in community education when they are already the medication safety experts. So it is in their wheelhouse to talk about this topic. Two, they have the physical location within their community for people to interact with them on a daily basis. They have, they are the most accessible health care provider and so why not include that education when they are engaging with patients? Even if a patient is not coming in to pick up prescription maybe there, they have signage or they have

education awareness information throughout their store so even if someone is coming to pick up a pack of gum or a snack or something from their store or an OTC, they are still going to receive that education.

These are leaders in their business, leaders in their community and so they are very much respected. There is such a need for more pharmacists to be involved in community issues where a health care expert is needed in addition to physicians and the medical profession, you know pharmacists should be there, too. So I think Generation RX is a very national fit for retail independent pharmacies, we have tried over the years in the creation of the content and rolling out the different educational toolkits and resources to have it all created for someone. Someone like a pharmacist who is owning their own store, oftentimes the main pharmacists behind the bench – they don't have the time to create the education themselves.

Nicolle McClure: Right, yeah.

Betsy Walker: So we have spent countless hours doing the research and the focus groups of what is the audience of a certain age group need for that, that is where our partnership with the Ohio State University College of Pharmacy comes in. The pharmacy professors in the college are Generation RX partners there. They are the ones creating the content for it from their expertise as pharmacists and medication safety experts.

So then together, you know the pharmacists can just pick up the resources and go. They don't need to create the presentations; they don't need to create the content themselves. We have all of the speaking notes for each of the PowerPoint presentations, for each of the games and activities. We have a full facilitator guide of exactly how to conduct the activities based upon the age – if someone has fifteen minutes, then we say here is what you can know in fifteen minutes. If someone has thirty or forty-five on an hour-long opportunity, here is what we would recommend.

So we try to take the work out of the hand of the pharmacists and just make it easy for them to just pick up the resource and go. And so I think with the very busy lives retail independent pharmacists lead, it is a very nice resource for them to use and of course it is all free. Everything that comes out of Generation Rx is free and strongly recommended for anyone to use.

Nicolle McClure: Yeah. So my parent company, we own pharmacies ourselves and we have used the Generation RX materials and I think I have always been really impressed with all the stuff that you guys have put together.

Betsy Walker: Thank you.

Nicolle McClure: You know, great information but also to be able to distinguish that four of those different age groups, I think it is very important. You touched on, I think a lot of

pharmacists want to do it but is just that barrier of time and a little bit overwhelming to have to know to put those materials together, but since you guys provide all that I think that is a great thing.

Betsy Walker:

Well you mentioned time, so even if the resources are available, we know that there is still going to be that barrier of time. It's hard for pharmacists to get away, especially those that are owner-operators and so I would encourage partnerships; I would encourage collaboration. One partner that has always been really helpful is student pharmacists. If you have a college of pharmacy, if retail independent is a preceptor for some of the students nearby, we actually have a wonderful partnership with the American Pharmacist Association through the Academy of Student Pharmacists. So each college of pharmacy has what they call their APhA-ASP Chapter in all of the colleges of pharmacies across the country. We have partnered with APhA-ASP since 2010 on having each of the colleges of pharmacy have a Generation RX program. So we have over 118 colleges of pharmacy that have a Generation Rx Chapter.

That is an army of student pharmacists that are spread out across the country, many of them are very close to pharmacies, retail Independent pharmacies, or other community pharmacies, and they would love to help. They are already doing those partnerships either on their campus or with other pharmacy locations and so I think that is a very easy connection.

Students are very driven, they are very creative, they have more time, they work for free. There is just like all these wonderful benefits, wonderful benefits. Shout out to all the student pharmacists that might be listening. And they have been doing fantastic work with Generation RX for years. So I would encourage if there's a practicing pharmacist that would like to get involved but isn't able to kind of shoulder it all. The other great thing about Generation Rx is that it is not just for the pharmacy community. Generation Rx is a community outreach tool that is used across the country in many other audiences. For example, we have a significant amount of our education being used in schools right now, K through 12 schools, and it is used by teachers or by prevention specialists from the local community substance abuse prevention organizations or community coalition.

If you have a staff member or if you have a family member that is passionate about this topic – if you even have a high school student, high school child or an employee – this is something that they can take and run with it as well. It is intended to be very simple education; it is intended to be easy for someone to present. You certainly do not have to be a pharmacist, but they can do it in partnership with your pharmacy. So it could be Joe's Main Street Pharmacy coming into the local schools to present Generation Rx and the pharmacy owner-operator can have a big role in that but does not have to be present all the time to actually coordinate all of the presentations and all the connections into the community

Nicolle McClure: Great. And again, I think that is just one more barrier taken down for some pharmacy owners out there that have not started the program yet but want to. And from a marketing standpoint I think it is... it helps distinguish you from your maybe some other competitors out there but also shows that community involvement and kind of goes back to core of what independent pharmacy is.

You had mentioned community collaboration.

Betsy Walker: Yeah.

Nicolle McClure: There could be other groups within the community that the pharmacists could partner with, help bring this message to their local community.

Betsy Walker: There absolutely is, and we have found that there is never – there is never enough prevention. So when a community is looking at addressing the Opioid epidemic, they are going to look at it from multiple sectors or multiple parts and factors of the issue. They are going to look at it from prevention, yes. But they are also going to look at it from intervention so use of naloxone for example or the access to treatment and getting people to treatment and some of the barriers and trying to resolve some of those barriers around access to treatment and getting people there, enough access to treatment and then recovery. There is so many different pieces and parts to it that a community is going to be engaged in. The role of a pharmacist can span across all of that, the entire continuum, but the role of prevention I think is such a natural fit for the pharmacist.

The pharmacist is always going to be thinking about the wellness of their patients. It is not just about filling a prescription to address a chronic disease. They are trying to get that person healthier in order to reduce the amount of health issues in their lives. They are trying to work on their wellness from upstream and so that is really what I would say is the similarity with Generation RX is that we are trying to prevent misuse from happening in the first place, so I think there is a very natural fit for pharmacists to do that. There is always an opportunity to have more prevention, more substance abuse prevention in communities. Not just on prescription medication but on all substances. I think when you have something, when you have an interested pharmacist, when you have someone that is passionate, when they have a solution that is ready to go and something that they can interact with and engage with multiple audiences, it is going to be well received.

So that's really our hope, that Generation RX would be a tool that would be useful in communities across the country in bringing that important prevention message to communities.

Nicolle McClure: Listeners ready to get started and wants to get engaged in the program. Where would they go to kind of take that next step?

Betsy Walker: The first step is going to be the website generationrx.org. When they go to generationrx.org, they are going to see several options for just education. They can start on about the issue. There is an area about the role of the pharmacy community which talks about that. There is a video focused on some of the great work that the pharmacists have been doing on Generation Rx over the years. But the contents, the main Bio content on generationrx.org where this education is under the tool kits section. If you just go to generationrx.org click on toolkits then you are going to see all our education work broken down by age and then I would just start small. Think about which audience are you interested in working with. Is it elementary school students? And if it is elementary school students, that is great. Is there one school or even one grade within that school that you could start with? So, start small, start manageable. Take a look at the education for one group. There is a lot of information on the website; there is a lot of pieces and parts to each of the toolkits.

And so just kind of taking a bite of something that is manageable given the rest of the responsibilities that the pharmacists have in their lives and the community members have and just start from here.

Nicolle McClure: Okay great. Anything else you want to add, tell our listeners about Generation Rx?

Betsy Walker: No. There is so much but, just thank you. Thank you to the pharmacy community for your commitment to preventing prescription drug misuse we know that Generation Rx and the idea of education outreach is just one of many, many things that a pharmacist does to think about how they can play a role in reducing prescription drug misuse, reducing the Opioid epidemic. There is so many things that they are doing behind the counter clinically and in partnership with prescribers and in partnership with their patients. We appreciate that Generation Rx is one of the additional ways to help that the pharmacists have found themselves to be doing and we just say thank you and please let us know how we can further help.

Nicolle McClure: Alright. Well thank you for joining me today I really appreciate your time and all the valuable information on Generation Rx.

Betsy Walker: Thank you.

Nicolle McClure: Again, this is Nicolle McClure with the pharmacy podcast network bringing you a special series with Cardinal Health. You can check out all the podcasts at pharmacypodcast.com

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