



by Wayne Morgan Caverly

Grow your business with screening tools

In an earlier article (In-home technology aids elderly compliance, *Pharmacy Post* September 2007), I described in-home automated dispensing products for patients who are caught in the “gap” between needing little or no medication assistance and full-time medication management. More recently (Out from behind the dispensary, *Pharmacy Post* May 2008), I wrote about how efficient use of pharmacy technology can promote pharmacist re-deployment.

Bringing the two earlier columns together, this time we’re looking at in-pharmacy diagnostic tools that can be used to improve patient outcomes while driving more business to your practice.



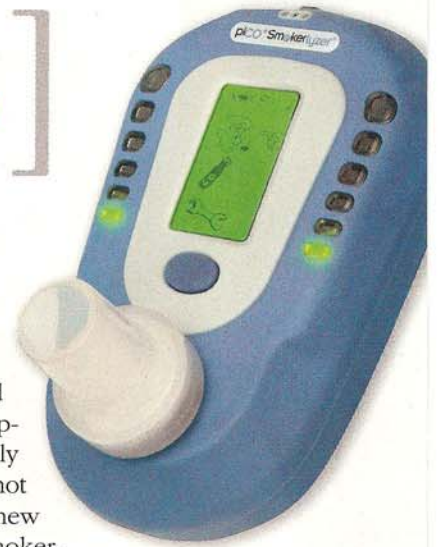
A SLEEPER HIT

Pharmacy Post’s April 2008 OTC market report pegs the market for sleep aids at \$13.6 million (up 6% over last year), and points out that as many as 30% of Canadians have trouble falling or staying asleep and only 9% use a drug to combat this problem. Many of those whose sleep is unsatisfying undoubtedly suffer from sleep apnea. Unfortunately the only way to test for this condition is an expensive overnight sleep lab test... or is it?

The SleepStrip disposable sleep apnea screener is available for approximately \$60 and allows your patient to get lab quality results in one night and in the comfort of their own home (and bed). Selling this product is a good first step, but the truly forward-thinking pharmacy will go further. Consider making an agreement with a local sleep clinic to refer patients who test positive for further testing and diagnosis—with the clinic referring patients back to you for medications, equipment and supplies.

NEW QUITTING TOOL

The same OTC market report indicated that smoking cessation OTC products are worth \$56 million and growing 3% annually. It appears this market is primarily gums and patches, so why not broaden your offering to new technology? The piCO+ Smokerlyzer is a smoking cessation tool that allows you to follow your patients’ tobacco cessation progress. You could sell the units to patients or have them come in for regular follow-up appointments (for a fee!) at which they use a pharmacy-owned device and your motivational expertise.



BECOME A MONITORING CENTRE

Bone density scanning is another service you can offer patients. As bone density testing is expensive you may want to partner with other pharmacies on the equipment, but it may even pay for itself just by the number of new patients it attracts to your pharmacy when you hold a monthly osteoporosis screening day. One such product, the accuDEXA Bone Densitometer, uses a finger scan and takes less than three minutes to scan and analyze. Patients get a printout of their results.

The list could go on and on: lipid and glucose monitors, microagulation (INR/PT) testing, etc. all can be used to bring new patients and increased business to your pharmacy practice. Sell the devices, sell the consumables, and most importantly, sell your time and expertise. □

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For references, product websites or additional information about these products, please contact Wayne: wayne@efficientpharmacy.com