



Robert Zirkelbach

PhRMA Initiative Aims to Create a Dialogue ABOUT THE VALUE OF MEDICINES

► Robert Zirkelbach, Executive VP, Public Affairs, PhRMA, talks about the association's new advertising and public affairs campaign.

PV: Why did PhRMA launch the GoBoldly campaign?

ZIRKELBACH: For the last couple of years, there has been a national discussion about cost and affordability of medicines. Too often that focus was exclusively on the price of medicines and ignored the scientific advances that are happening in the biopharmaceutical industry.

We are truly living in a new era of medicine, where new treatments are coming on the market for how we treat disease. Today, science is developing medicines based on real living cells that are targeted to real individual patients based on their unique genetic make up.

One of the things that we wanted to do was highlight the men and women who are fighting every single day to develop new treatments and cures and who are leading this innovative, groundbreaking science in the biopharmaceutical industry.

This is a broad, comprehensive campaign. We are going around the country, meeting with stakeholders and the broader healthcare policy community to have a discussion about what this new era of science means for patients, for the healthcare system, and how we treat disease.

For public policy, we want to discuss how we ensure the public policy environment fosters innovation, rewards risk taking, and enables our healthcare system to continue to lead the world in medical innovation.

As part of that, we also want to talk about how we pay for these medicines and how can we lead an effort to pay for medicines differently so that we are paying for medicines based on how well medicines perform in patients and not just on the volume of medicines that are provided.

PV: How do you plan to address the topic of pricing?

ZIRKELBACH: We are going to host events to bring other players to the table, from providers to payers to patients and policy leaders to have a more in-depth discussion about the more complicated issues.

One of the things that we launched as part of this campaign is called the Value Collaborative. We are going to bring leaders in our industry and lead-

ers in other healthcare industries together to talk about how we move toward a more value-driven system, what is happening in the marketplace today, what types of innovative partnerships are happening, and the public policy changes that are needed to foster that.

There are existing laws and regulations that make it hard for our members to enter into some of these arrangements with health insurance companies or pharmacy benefit managers. For example, our member companies are prohibited in how much information they can share with an insurance company about the value of their medicines. Right now, they can only share what is on the label even if they have data that may be really helpful for a payer in doing an outcomes-based arrangement. They might have information about hospital readmissions, for example, or on other outcomes metrics that could be useful in building an outcomes-based arrangement but they can't share that information.

PV: How does PhRMA plan to discuss value with patients?

ZIRKELBACH: When we are talking about value, there are two pieces. It is important to highlight the innovation and the science. People's perception of what they pay for a medicine is impacted not just by price but what they think they are getting. Right now, there is a lack of appreciation about how truly innovative and transformative the new medicines coming to the marketplace are. The medicines today are better and far more transformative than we had just a few years ago.

We also need to have a conversation about insurance coverage of medicines. In recent years, patients have had to pay for a greater and greater share of the bill. Deductibles are increasing and co-insurance is going up. And patients are finding it harder to access the treatments they need. This is the whole purpose of insurance — to be able to help people afford treatments they need.

For those patients who need help, every single one of our member companies has patient assistance programs. If a patient needs a medicine and can't afford it, chances are he or she is eligible for assistance from our member companies. Our members are serious about making sure people have access to their medicines.

PhRMA's GoBoldly Campaign

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) has launched a national, multiyear advertising and public affairs initiative. The campaign, GoBoldly, showcases the industry's unsung heroes driving cutting-edge advances in science and highlights the tremendous opportunity that exists to tackle our most complex and devastating health conditions.

PhRMA plans to spend tens of millions of dollars a year on this campaign, which includes national TV, print, digital, and radio advertising. In addition to paid advertising, the campaign will include public affairs activities to foster a national dialogue with researchers, caregivers, patients, and policymakers in forums around the country.

PV: A recent Harris poll found that only 9% of the respondents believe the pharma industry puts patients over profits. Do you think this campaign can improve the industry's reputation?

ZIRKELBACH: I do think it will have an impact on reputation. Unfortunately, a couple of examples, such as Martin Shkreli and the EpiPen, have received the most attention over the last few years. These are examples that don't reflect what our member companies do every single day.

We want to help people see the other side of the story; our members are bringing to the market truly innovative treatments that are making huge progress in the fight against hepatitis C, cancer, and many rare diseases.

Also as an industry, we have to make sure that people understand what we are doing to help people to access the medicines they need. We have a program, the Partnership for Prescription Assistance, a clearinghouse for people to find out what patient assistance programs they may be eligible for. And we need to show that this industry is serious about finding new and better ways to pay for these treatments. **PV**

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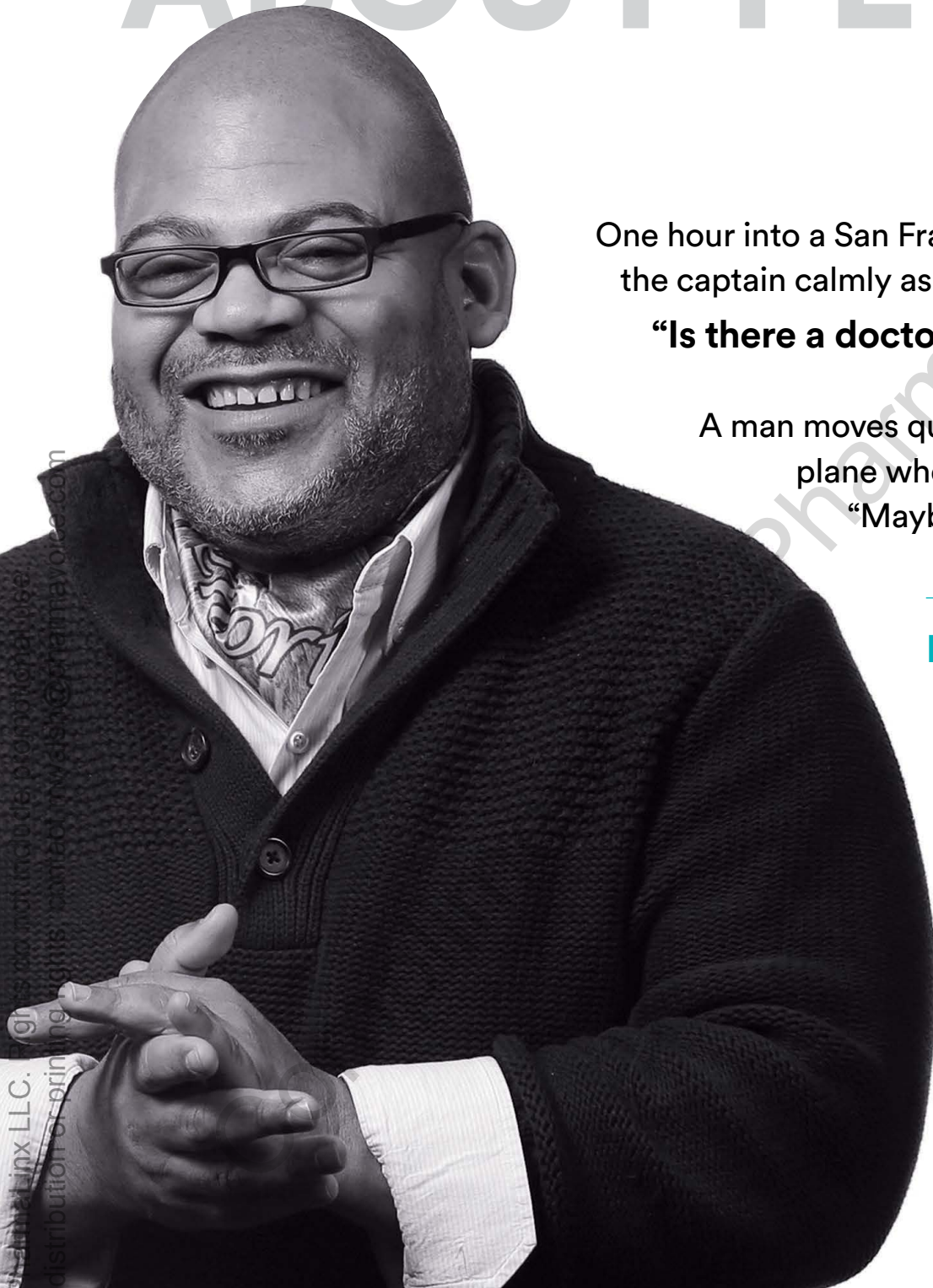


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“Is there a doctor or nurse on board?”

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I am Malik Cobb

Lockwood Scientific Director
Certified Physician Assistant
12 years work experience in a liver transplant unit

My true colors:
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