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Letters...

Send your letters to feedback@pharmavoiced.com. Please include your name, title, company, and business phone number. Letters chosen for publication may be edited for length and clarity. All submissions become the property of PharmaLinx LLC.

Getting personal

There's a pretty good chance that everyone reading this special issue — Patients' Voices — is either a patient, a caregiver to a patient, or knows someone who has been diagnosed with a chronic or acute condition. But just because we are all patients or know a patient doesn't mean our or their needs are all the same. In fact, it's quite the opposite. This special issue was conceived with that thought in mind. We wanted to understand how the trend of patient-centricity was being addressed across a number of intersections along the healthcare continuum.

Unique to this issue is feedback from a dozen or so patients and patient opinion leaders, who talk frankly about what is working and what is not in terms of clinical trials, healthcare apps and digital tools, advocacy groups, health literacy, and marketing in terms of patient mapping and storytelling. And in keeping with our molecule-to-market editorial approach, we also tapped more than 65 industry executives to provide their insights on the industry's progress to address some of the most-pressing areas of interest to patients and companies alike.



Recognizing how personal the patient experience is, I asked the PharmaVOICE editorial team if they would be willing to share their own stories. They enthusiastically agreed.

Denise Myshko, our managing editor, who has been an editor in healthcare for more than 25 years, ironically faced an issue related to health literacy. When her daughter was an infant, she was treated for reflux with metoclopramide, which helps to speed food through the stomach. A refill contained medication that was a different color. Denise didn't think to question it until 24 hours later, after she had given her daughter several doses. The pharmacist had made a mistake and given her the wrong medication. In the United States, preventable medication errors impact more than 7 million patients and cost almost \$21 billion annually across all care settings. To read more about the impact of health literacy, please go to Patients and Health Literacy.

Robin Robinson, our senior editor, was a fierce and relentless advocate for her mother during her cancer and end of life care, but she admits having been totally helpless as a patient. She was misdiagnosed with a UTI when she actually had a burst appendix. She left the ER and went home because the ER doc told her to do so, even though she knew it was wrong. Robin's story reinforces that we all need a second set of ears and eyes to help us make sound healthcare decisions. Turn to The Changing Role of Patient Advocacy to read how patient advocacy is changing. (Robin's story, thankfully, ends well and she fully recovered.)

Our feature editor Kim Ribbink's husband received an urgent call after a cardiovascular test, telling him a polymorphic VT had been detected. The GP rushed him to an appointment with a electrocardiologist, who instantly recommended the need for a defibrillator and surgery the following week. They both knew something didn't seem right. Fortunately, they sought a second opinion and learned the images had been misread. After further tests, no VT could be detected and no defibrillator was required. But, without the right connections and some level of health education, he would have been fitted with a device that would have had a seriously negative effect on his life.

We would be happy to hear your patient story, drop us a line and we will post on our PharmaVOICE blog.

Taren Grom
Taren Grom
Editor

Their word...

DENISE MYSHKO
Managing Editor



Low health literacy can contribute to poor outcomes and can impact the safe use of medications and adherence.

ROBIN ROBINSON
Senior Editor



Real life patient stories provide tremendous value for not only fellow patients, but also physicians, drug researchers, clinical trial experts, and last but not least, pharma marketers.

KIM RIBBINK
Features Editor



The voice of the patient is becoming more prominent, aided by advocacy groups, easier access to information, and the changing face of healthcare.

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