



The Evolving Pharmaceutical Marketplace: What Will Come Next?

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There is little precedence for the changes we have seen in the healthcare marketplace in the past 36 months. From the passage of a historic healthcare reform bill to an economic slowdown that saw the first-ever decline in the number of prescriptions filled in a year, we have been presented with a number of challenges that will have long-lasting impacts on our industry. It is imperative that we continue to seek a clear method for defining value in healthcare delivery.

New developments in genetic testing and comparative effectiveness research make it possible to tailor therapies to specific situations and patients. This tailoring will make it possible to continue to promote the use of generics for many common conditions and, in turn, make it possible to pay for branded products and biopharmaceuticals when they are the best treatment choices.

The pharmaceutical marketplace continues to evolve, with an expanding array of generic medications for common serious diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. There also are increasing numbers of more expensive, specialized medications in both oral and injectable forms for a growing list of serious illnesses. Our challenge will be to improve the adherence to generics and to manage the more expensive, specialized products to be certain that they are both available for and received by those in need of treatment.

This dichotomy will lead to approaches that manage large populations via new technology and social media while providing personalized services to those with more difficult-to-manage diseases. Networking via social media with an appropriate moderator may allow patients with specific disorders to share concerns, ask and answer questions in their own way, and encourage each other

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to take a greater role in their own care. Such roles could include lifestyle changes, improved medication adherence, and advocacy for better treatments. What will come next? Will formularies tailor themselves to the genetic profiles of patients? Will consumer-directed plans expand to increase the incentives to patients for adherence and for using higher value drugs? Time will tell. What we do know is that the readers of this journal and members of the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Society will be at the forefront of these innovations. Keep it up. [ajpb](#)