



Reworking the Recipe

Expanding Customer-Facing Medical Teams Beyond Medical Science Liaisons

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Introduction

Pharma continues to evolve in the way Medical Affairs engages with Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs). From a Medical Affairs perspective, the global upheaval of 2020-21 highlighted the importance of targeting the best stakeholders, knowing exactly how team members are engaging with those stakeholders, and maximizing the effectiveness of field-based medical teams.

As part of this introspection, top-tier Medical Affairs leaders are beginning to realize that they are likely not optimizing their effort if they have Medical Science Liaisons (MSLs) focused only on top KOLs. Looking forward, new roles and new ways of targeting promise to change the shape of Medical Affairs.

This is an idea that has begun to percolate across the biopharma landscape. In their 2021 article in *Pharmaceutical Medicine*, Alexander Bedenkov and colleagues note that new field medical roles can maximize pre- and post-launch scientific engagement, partnership, and education. They believe that by “reimagining the ways of working within the Medical Affairs function, we prepare it to be future-proof through an intensified focus on new skills that will drive innovation and creativity in response to fast-paced healthcare changes.”¹

Indeed, as the Amplity team listens to clients across the industry, we continue to identify communication gaps within Pharma’s customer-facing Medical teams. We have identified new and evolving targets for scientific communication that are beyond the scope of traditional MSLs. We are hearing a rising call for a new approach to fill those gaps, and it’s becoming clear that the time has come to apply a nimble approach to the design of customer-facing Medical teams.



Reworking The Recipe to Go Beyond Just 3 Letters

In response to these marketplace needs, the Amplity team has begun developing and deploying an array of new customer-facing Medical professionals who fill unique roles and serve a distinctive set of targeted stakeholders:



Clinical Trial Liaisons

CTLs typically focus on investigators, study sites, clinical trial personnel, and community referring physicians. CTLs can be engaged throughout the life of a clinical trial, assisting with scientific background, disease education, research rationale, protocol inclusion/exclusion criteria, and pipeline support. CTLs provide value in ensuring the sponsor study is top of mind for investigators and in keeping study sites enrolling patients.



Diagnostic Liaisons

DLs fill a role designed to address the undiagnosed or misdiagnosed patient challenges that may occur, particularly within the rare disease space. DL teams primarily target community level practitioners to help find patients in an attempt to cut years off their diagnosis journey and potentially get them to a treatment faster.



Community Medical Liaisons

The CML serves as an extension of the manufacturer's customer-facing medical team at the community practice level. CML teams are composed of mid-level practitioners who conduct peer-to-peer clinical exchange within the healthcare community in areas where there is unmet medical need and gaps in the provision of education by pharma. CML teams not only extend the reach of the field-facing Medical Affairs team, they also engage in evidence-based clinical dialogue with practitioners who may not meet the usual definition of a Key Opinion Leader.



CTLs, DLs, and CMLs bring novel skills and training to their organizations, and are part of a new, more flexible approach to building Medical Affairs teams. This emerging model often relies on a smaller number of MSAs along with these other professional teams, forming a custom-designed force that matches the needs of each brand and marketplace. Together, these teams of field-based and remote experts can deliver a complete array of support.



Conclusion

As you look to set the strategy for the coming year, take a moment to consider whether your current team structure still represents the best use of your medical resources. This new era is revealing opportunities to apply a nimble strategy to Medical Affairs teams, and we are hearing the call for a different approach. In response to these new marketplace needs, the Amplity team has begun developing and deploying an array of new Medical Affairs professionals who fill unique roles, including Clinical Trial Liaisons, Diagnostic Liaisons, and Community Medical Liaisons. These specialists bring novel skills and training to their organizations, and our clients who have harnessed these innovative roles have achieved significantly more success than traditional methods had delivered. Ready to discuss how we can optimize your Medical Affairs strategy?

Let's talk.

Reference:

1. Bedenkov A, Moreno C, Agustin L, Jain N, Newman A, Feng L, Kostello G. Customer Centricity in Medical Affairs Needs Human-centric Artificial Intelligence. *Pharmaceutical Medicine*. 2021; 35(1): 21–29. Accessed August 9, 2021.