

Where Should Pharmacies be Located in the Future?

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AmeriSource Index Asks Consumers About Purchasing Patterns, Where They Receive the Best Service, Internet Buying and Wish List of Services

Where should the drug store of the future be located?

VALLEY FORGE, Pa., Jul 30, 2001 /PRNewswire/ --Adjacent to doctor's offices, according to 56 percent of respondents in the second AmeriSource Index, a nationwide, quarterly survey released today by AmeriSource Health Corporation. Shopping malls were a distant second -- with 19 percent of respondents selecting this choice. Trailing behind were the Internet (5 percent), office buildings (3 percent), health clubs and gyms (2 percent), and restaurants (1 percent).

The survey polled 1,022 consumers about a range of topics including the types of special services they would like to see in their local pharmacies, Internet buying, prescription purchasing patterns, and where they received the best service.

E-Commerce

Despite the Internet's initial promise to transform consumer-purchasing habits, most consumers still purchase prescription medications through conventional channels. Sixty-five percent of respondents said they had not purchased medications over the Internet and did not intend to do so in the future. These findings mirror the results from the first AmeriSource Index, conducted in May 2001. In that survey, 64 percent of respondents said they had not purchased prescriptions over the Internet and had no plans to do so in the future.

Expanding Services

What special services did consumers want to see in their local pharmacies? Nutrition information, dietary aids, vitamins and minerals topped the list of choices offered to survey respondents, with 21 percent making this selection. Next were general health education programs (15 percent), followed by diabetes prevention and treatment programs (12 percent), health screenings (11 percent) and diet and weight loss information or programs (10 percent). Cholesterol-reduction information or programs came in sixth place, at 7 percent, followed by pain management programs (6 percent) and immunizations (5 percent). Not surprisingly, cholesterol-reduction programs scored higher among older adults, with 15 percent of 55-to-64 year olds choosing this option and 11 percent of respondents 65 and over selecting it as well.

Consumers were almost evenly split on whether they would be willing to pay a modest service fee for these special services. Forty-nine percent said they would, while 48 percent said they would not. However, a majority of women and respondents ages 18-to-44 said they would be willing to pay for these services. Conversely, older adults (ages 55-to-65+) were more reluctant to pay for additional services.

Herbal Medicines Rank High

When asked what offerings their pharmacies should add or expand, the top choice was literature or diagnostic information on diseases, with 28 percent selecting this option from a list of five choices. Vitamins and herbal medicines, however, also scored high, placing second, with 25 percent of respondents making this choice. Vitamins and herbal medicines were even more popular among 25-to-34 year olds, with 34 percent in this age group selecting this answer. Patient counseling services came in third at 23 percent. Film development and photocopying, and cosmetics trailed, at 8 percent and 3 percent respectively.

Selecting a Pharmacy

Once again, the AmeriSource Index asked consumers what factors led them to select a particular pharmacy to fill most of their prescriptions. In the May 2001 survey, a convenient location was the top choice. This time, respondents were asked to choose the most important factor "other than convenient location." Accepting an insurance card came in first at 22 percent. Next were low prices and personalized service, which nearly tied at 20 percent and 19 percent respectively. Trust came in fourth at 15 percent and once again ranked higher among older adults 55-to-65+ (18 percent), as it did in the May 2001 survey. Trust was also important to 45-to-54 year olds, with 17 percent of respondents in this age group selecting this answer. Sound medical advice and less waiting time competed for last place, at 12 percent and 11 percent respectively.

Who Offers the Best Service?

When asked which type of pharmacy offers the best service, locally owned neighborhood drugs stores edged out chains, 39 percent to 36 percent. Supermarkets were a distant third at 15 percent, with mass merchandisers far behind at 4 percent.

The AmeriSource Index

The AmeriSource Index is a quarterly survey of trends, purchasing behaviors and opinions about pharmacists and their customers. The first survey was conducted in May 2001. Future surveys will be released on a quarterly basis.

About AmeriSource

AmeriSource Health Corporation (NYSE: AAS), with approximately \$14 billion in annualized operating revenue, is a leading distributor of pharmaceutical and related healthcare products and services, and the industry's largest provider of pharmaceuticals to the acute care/health systems market. Headquartered in Valley Forge, PA, the Company serves its base of about 15,000 customers accounts through a national network of more than 22 strategically located distribution facilities. For news and additional information about the company, visit its web site at www.amerisource.com.

1,022 Respondents

1. Where do you think the pharmacy of the future should be located?

TOTAL

Adjacent to doctors' offices	56%
In shopping malls	19%
On the Internet	5%
In office buildings	3%
Via the mail	3%
Near health clubs and gyms	2%
Near restaurants	1%
Don't know/none of these	10%

2. Which of the following special services would you MOST like to find at your local pharmacy?

55-64 65+ TOTAL

Nutrition information, dietary aids, vitamins and minerals	21%		
General health education programs		15%	
Diabetes prevention and treatment programs		12%	
Health screenings	11%		
Diet and weight loss information or programs		10%	
Cholesterol-reduction information or programs	15%	11%	7%
Pain management programs		6%	
Immunizations	5%		
Trained cosmeticians	1%		
Don't know/none of these	12%		

3. Would you be willing to pay a modest service fee for any of these services?

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+ TOTAL

Yes	56%	58%	54%		49%	
No			59%	63%	48%	
Don't know				3%		

4. Which of the following would you MOST like to see your pharmacy add or expand?

25-34 TOTAL

Literature or diagnostic information on diseases		28%
Vitamins and herbal medicines	34%	25%
Patient counseling services		23%
Film development, photocopying and other similar services		8%
Cosmetics	3%	
Don't know/none of these		13%

5. Many people have begun to purchase prescription medications and nonprescription medications over the Internet. Which of the following statements MOST closely describes your feeling about this?

TOTAL

I HAVE NOT purchased medications over the Internet, and DO NOT intend to do so in the future 65%

I HAVE NOT purchased medications over the Internet,
but WOULD consider doing so in the future 29%
I HAVE purchased medications over the Internet and
plan to do so again 3%
I HAVE purchased medications over the Internet but
DO NOT plan to do so again 1%
Don't know 2%

6. Other than a convenient location, which quality is MOST important to
you in selecting a pharmacy?

45-54 55-64 65+ TOTAL

Accept your insurance card				22%
Low prices		20%		
Personalized attention and service				19%
Trust	17%	18%	18%	15%
Sound medical advice				12%
Less waiting time for prescriptions				11%
Don't know/none of these				1%

7. In what type of pharmacy have you experienced the BEST service?

TOTAL

Locally owned neighborhood drug store		39%
Chain drug store	36%	
Supermarket pharmacy		15%
Mass merchandiser	4%	
Don't know/none of these		6%

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