

**Abstract:**

Independent community pharmacies continue to face financial pressures due to declining prescription reimbursement rates, the growth of large chain pharmacies, and the influence of pharmacy benefit managers. To maintain success, independent pharmacies must focus on diversification of services. Parkland Pharmacy, an independent pharmacy chain operating six locations across central Missouri, has adopted a differentiation business strategy that focuses on expanding clinical and non-dispensing services. However, internal data indicates that utilization of many of their services remains low.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Parkland Pharmacy's current marketing strategies to promote their services among their entire patient population. A survey was conducted among adult patients at Parkland Pharmacy. Following IRB approval, participants were recruited through in-person, telehealth conversations, or social media over two months. The survey assessed demographic characteristics, patient awareness of pharmacy services, sources of promotion, and interest in utilizing them.

Results demonstrated that awareness of pharmacy services varied. Vaccinations, health screenings, and home delivery services were the most recognized, while awareness of medication synchronization, compliance packaging, and specialized compounding services was lower. These results identified the most effective marketing strategies for patient outreach. Participants reported in-pharmacy signage, interactions with pharmacy staff, and word-of-mouth were the most effective forms of marketing. These findings suggest that expanding direct communication strategies within the pharmacy is more likely to increase awareness of services. By incorporating these strategies, it will help Parkland Pharmacy to increase service utilization and, ultimately, improve patient outcomes.

