Legislative Awareness Among Student Pharmacists: Focus on Provider Status

Alka Bhatt, Pharm.D. Candidate 2015 Paul Weber RPh., MD, Michael Toscani PharmD., Donna M. Feudo B.S.Pharm, RPh.

Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Methods

The survey was distributed anonymously through survey monkey to student pharmacists at Rutgers Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy. The answer choices were “True/Yes”, “False/No” and, when applicable, “I don’t know”. The survey was posted on Rutgers Pharmacy Facebook groups on November 5th and November 9th and open laptops at an advocacy month event at Rutgers on October 14th, 2014. The survey questions/correct answers were as follows:

1. Consent / Agree
2. Have you seen the Provider Status Poster in the Pharmacy Lounge? / Yes or No
3. H.R. 4190 is the federal bill to recognize Pharmacists Provider Status / False
4. The national Provider Status bill would offer pharmacists’ reimbursement for services based on each state’s current scope of practice for the state / False
5. A Provider Status Bill will allow reimbursement for covered services to all pharmacists / False
6. Is your Representative a cosponsor to this bill? / Yes, No, or I don’t know
7. Based off of your answers to the questions on this survey, if the school drafted a letter or script, would you be comfortable writing to or calling your state representative to urge them to cosponsor this bill? / Yes, No, or I don’t know

Awareness was evaluated based on the correct answers to questions 3.4 and 5. The study also evaluated if student pharmacists answered in favor of contacting their legislator on a current pharmacy issue with increased knowledge about the issue. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data obtained from subjects. There will be no additional statistical analysis.

Discussion and Conclusions

It did not appear that the educational poster contributed to raising awareness in students as the percentages were very similar.

The percentage of students willing to contact their legislator was slightly higher with more correct answers (78% versus 68%). Based on the open responses to the survey, there was a potential correlation between raising awareness and a willingness to contact a legislator. A larger scale study would need to be done to show a strong correlation.

The actual experience of viewing an educational poster correlated to a higher willingness to contact a legislator (89% versus 43% as seen in Figure 3). There is a suggestive correlation that recent exposure to advocacy awareness materials leads to a higher willingness to contact a legislator, where the difference was 42% between the two groups (Figure 3). Previous knowledge/awareness of a legislative issue was an important factor in students becoming involved. Therefore, pharmacist associations should engage and educate students about the bill prior to any “calls for action”.

Further research to identify other motivational factors for legislative awareness could be evaluated during the advocacy month. The study did not determine the impact of involvement on advocacy awareness. This an area that could be evaluated by evaluating if students did actually contact their legislator. There is a plan to conduct research in that area.

References

http://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr4190/BILLS-113hr4190ih.pdf

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