

POLICY & PRACTICE

Solaraze Ads Run Afoul of FDA

The Food and Drug Administration has warned Doak Dermatologics that materials used by sales representatives and a journal ad for its Solaraze gel (diclofenac sodium) are promoting off-label and unapproved uses. In a letter sent to the company, the FDA's Division of Drug Marketing, Advertising, and Communications said that the materials are misleading because they "suggest that Solaraze Gel is approved for use in the treatment of AK (actinic keratoses) when used in combination with cryotherapy." The materials include a bar graph with data on patients treated with cryotherapy alone or cryotherapy followed by Solaraze; the sales aid included before and after pictures of patients treated with both therapies. Solaraze is approved only as a monotherapy. Doak also failed to submit the journal ad to the FDA when it was published, as is required.

AAD Alert on Mall Cosmetic Surgery

In response to the growing trend of cosmetic procedures being performed in malls, at spas, and walk-in clinics, the American Academy of Dermatology has issued a consumer alert urging patients to use only board-certified physicians for cosmetic surgery. The growing availability of procedures that are being offered, both by nonphysicians and in more locations, may provide convenience, but "the limited training and supervision of the person performing the procedure, and the equipment available to handle complications or medical emergencies, can jeopardize the health and appearance of the patient," said Dr. Arielle N.B. Kauvar, of the department of dermatology at New York University, New York, in a statement issued by the academy. Dermatologists are seeing more patients who've had botched procedures, according to the AAD. A 2007 survey by the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery found that 56% of members who responded said they were seeing more patients with complications, such as burns, scarring, and skin discoloration, from procedures conducted by nonphysicians.

FDA, Defense Dept. to Share Data

The Department of Defense will share data and expertise with the FDA related to the review and use of FDA-regulated drugs, biologics, and medical devices in an effort to identify potential concerns and to recognize the benefits of products, the two agencies said. The DoD will share general patient data such as prescriptions, laboratory results, and patient weight from military health system records with the FDA, although the agencies will protect all personal health information exchanged under the agreement. Among the DoD programs involved in the agreement is TRICARE, which serves 9.1 million members of the uniformed services, military re-

tirees, and their families. TRICARE prescription data likely will be the first information shared as part of the project. The partnership between the DoD and FDA is part of the FDA's Sentinel Network, a project intended to explore linking private sector and public sector information to create an integrated electronic network.

Survey Shows Poor Sunscreen Use

Forty percent of people who responded to a recent survey said they never wear sunscreen. The lack of use was highest among men, 47% of whom said they never use sunscreen, compared with 34% of women. The mid-May telephone survey of 521 women and 483 men was conducted for iVillage and the Skin Cancer Foundation by GfK Roper Public Affairs and Media. Sixty percent of respondents said they at least occasionally use sunscreen, but only 11% use one with an SPF of 15 or higher every day. Reapplication of sunscreen is skimpy; 74% said they reapply every 4-6 hours and 28% said they reapply at least every 2 hours, as recommended.

FDA Updates Tanning Info

The Food and Drug Administration has updated its online information on tanning. The Web page, which formerly focused on indoor tanning, now contains information about ultraviolet radiation; the risks of both indoor and outdoor tanning; tanning pills and sunless tanning lotions; tips on sun protection; and how to choose a sunscreen. The site also has links to tanning information at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Cancer Society, the American Academy of Dermatology, and other organizations. The site is at www.fda.gov/cdrh/tanning.

Publix to Offer Free Antibiotics

Publix Super Markets Inc. will offer seven oral antibiotics free of charge at its 684 pharmacy locations in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Tennessee, the Lakeland, Fla.-based chain said. The antibiotics included in the program—amoxicillin, sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim (SMZ-TMP), cephalexin, ciprofloxacin penicillin VK, (excluding extended-release ciprofloxacin), ampicillin, and erythromycin (excluding Ery-Tab)—account for almost 50% of the generic pediatric prescriptions filled at Publix, the company said. New or current customers simply need a prescription, which will be filled regardless of the customer's insurance coverage. The chain will cover up to a 14-day supply, and there is no limit on the number of free prescriptions. However, Publix will no longer match the \$4 price on generic prescriptions offered by rival chain Wal-Mart. A company spokesman told the St. Petersburg Times that Publix never had an official match, but that it did fill generics for \$4 when asked to do so by customers.

—Alicia Ault

MANAGING YOUR
DERMATOLOGY PRACTICE

Rewarding Employees

A survey by the Council of Communications Management confirms what any good human resources manager knows: Recognition of a job performed well, not money, is the best motivator of employee performance.

Unfortunately, most physicians do not seem to understand or apply this basic business concept. This is despite the fact that doctors themselves said, in a separate survey, that they much prefer to practice in offices and clinics where their hard work is recognized and rewarded.

In "1001 Ways to Reward Employees" (New York: Workman Publishing, 1994), Bob Nelson said, "While money is important to employees, what tends to motivate them to perform—and to perform at higher levels—is the thoughtful, personal kind of recognition that signifies true appreciation for a job well done."

Too often, a physician or a boss's idea of a reward is a yearly cash bonus, usually given during the holiday season. But giving the same reward to everyone at the same time every year—often called "jelly bean motivation" by consultants—not only does not inspire employees to work harder and better, but on the contrary, can actually serve as a disincentive to excellent employees who see no appreciation or acknowledgement of their beyond-the-call performance. Even the most mediocre employees don't see it as a reward. Rather, the bonus becomes an entitlement—just an expected, meaningless component of their normal compensation.

Nelson lists three simple guidelines for effectively rewarding employees:

- ▶ Match the reward to the individual. Reward each person in ways that each individual employee finds rewarding.
- ▶ Match the reward to the achievement. An employee who successfully completes a 2-year-long medical records reorganization deserves a more substantial reward than does one who simply runs an errand for you.
- ▶ Be timely and specific. To be effective, rewards must be given as soon as possible after a specific laudable behavior or achievement, and the employee should always be told why he or she is receiving it. Additionally, it's important to keep in mind that rewards that come weeks or months after the fact, and those that seem to be given for no particular reason, do little or nothing to accomplish their desired effect.

So how do you know which rewards your employees will find rewarding? That's easy: Ask them!

I periodically solicit suggestions for non-monetary rewards from my staff. "I can't give you money," I tell them, "but I'll consider just about anything else."

Some of their ideas have been surprisingly creative—and surprisingly cheap. For example, my employees are required

to park their cars each day on the other side of the hospital campus from my office building. One of them suggested that a closer parking space would be a good reward. I was able to obtain an extra access card for the doctors' lot right next to my building, and each month one "Employee of the Month" gets to park there. This reward, which costs me nothing, has become the most sought-after in our office.

In fact, there are many effective rewards that cost little or nothing. As Nelson puts it, "A sincere word of thanks from the right person at the right time can mean more to an employee than a raise, a formal award, or a whole wall of certificates or plaques."

One of the strongest motivators imaginable is the knowledge that you, as the boss, will take a moment to notice a job well done and praise it publicly, in a timely manner.

Time off is another powerful motivator, which surveys show is almost universally popular among employees of all types.

According to Michael LeBoeuf, author of "The Greatest Management Principle in the World" (New York: Putnam, 1985), there are three ways you can use time off as a reward:

- ▶ If the job permits it, assign a deadline and minimum quality standard to a task. If the task is finished ahead of the deadline, the extra time is the employee's reward.
- ▶ If allowing employees to leave early is impractical, specify an amount of work you want done by a certain time. If the work is completed on time and satisfactorily, give a predetermined amount of time off as the reward. You can also set up a scoring system in which employees earn an hour off for a specified period of productive work. When they have earned 4 hours they can have a half day off, and 8 hours earns a day off, and so on.
- ▶ Award time off for improvements in quality, safety, teamwork, or any other behavior you feel is important.

By the way, LeBoeuf's "greatest management principle" is that "the things that get rewarded get done."

Whatever rewards you choose, monetary or otherwise, always be sure to choose them and award them with sincerity. Cheap wall plaques, lapel pins, and other tchotchkes usually fail to motivate employees in the intended way because they come across as being empty gestures given out in a thoughtless manner. On the other hand, a few very simple and honest words of thanks go much further. ■

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