

Alliance Healthcare In The News

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AmerisourceBergen & Alliance Healthcare Executive Perspective Business Leaders on the Omicron Surge

As the Omicron variant surges throughout the globe, executives across AmerisourceBergen shared industry perspectives on this next chapter of the pandemic.

Kalman Petro, Managing Director, Alliance Healthcare Netherlands

The Covid pandemic has put the adaptability of our customers, community pharmacies, outpatient pharmacies, dispensing general practitioners and hospitals to the test. Due to the Dutch health care system and the guidelines from the health insurers, pharmacies are regularly faced with shortages. As a result, medication has to be changed frequently. Our pharmacists are therefore used to acting inventively and flexibly. Then they were also confronted with the impact of Covid. They responded with all their might to a completely new health challenge in a short space of time. I already had a lot of respect for their ability to guarantee pharmaceutical care under challenging circumstances; this respect has only grown.

In our own organization, we also had to react at lightning speed, on the one hand to keep the existing distribution going and on the other hand to ensure that our customers had access to sufficient Covid protection and testing products. Our team has shown that it can handle this as well. This made us think about how to organize the distribution of pharmaceutical products and patient care in smarter ways. So, we are now working on an omnichannel pharmacy model, together with our Alphega franchise pharmacists and our own Boots pharmacies. Covid has enabled us to break new ground as an organization, improve the cooperation with our customers and, also to be better prepared for a future pandemic.

Javier Casas, Managing Director, Alliance Healthcare Spain

Over the last months, the pandemic circumstances have changed and primary care, which is closer to the patient, has become an even more essential and key element of supporting the population's health and wellbeing. In Spain, for the first time, an important step change has been taken in terms of the role of community pharmacies play. They are now established as safe and reliable health centres for citizens authorised to support in the confirmation of people having contracted the virus, reporting these positive test results to the health authorities and providing necessary support. In addition, pharmacies are the approved point of purchase for antigen tests and again are also authorised to carry out these tests with patients. At Alliance Healthcare, it is clear to us that these added value services are the way forward beyond the pandemic. That is always why the professionals at Alliance Healthcare Spain continue to work hard rising to these new circumstances and have tried to meet the needs of pharmacies and citizens. These have not been easy times, as this new variant has also had an impact on our people, but despite everything, we should all be proud of the role we are playing.



Andrew Richmond, VP, Director of Manufacturer Relations and Services, Alliance Healthcare

“The Covid pandemic has challenged healthcare models like never before. Whilst the supply chain has previously been a dependable but somewhat overlooked link in the medicines and healthcare product supply chain, the need to efficiently and consistently move medicines from point of manufacture to point of use has now been proven beyond all doubt to be a critical enabler in the management of a population’s health. Alliance Healthcare and Alloga (our pre-wholesale business) colleagues have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to ensure the safe supply of vital medicines and equipment – if we could source it, we supplied it. Our warehouse team members and drivers turned up for work during anxious times, they travelled when many of us tried to stay safe at home, and they ensured our service commitment to pharmacists, hospitals and patients was delivered. The lessons from Covid are myriad, but in Alliance Healthcare we are more convinced than ever of the value our people, processes and infrastructure provide to healthcare professionals, patients and communities.”

Iulian Trandafir, Managing Director, Alliance Healthcare Romania

Paradoxically the pandemic is contributing to the development and improvement in our ways of working. Making faster decisions at all different levels was one of the first changes to be seen and the company has had to step outside of silos to collaborate and move faster. This new transformative way of working through accelerated digitalization improved the speed of decision making. For sure virtual meetings will never totally replace face to face meetings, but this alternative option and clever way to connect will without doubt continue long after the pandemic.

Now, with Omicron on the stage, we are more prepared as a company to face the challenges as unlike in March 2020 when the main challenge was to adapt, learn very fast and make very small steps without knowing anything about next day, we have already gone through that learning curve.

It is very challenging to sustain a sense of community in our team after two incredible years and finding ways to maintain an emotional connection with our workforce right now is critical. No matter how far flung our people are, it is important to convey a sense of community and connection, even in a virtual world. Now the long-term success of our organization is to balance deep empathy with economic realities.

Heather Zenk, RPh, PharmD, President of Supply Chain Operations and Distribution Services, AmerisourceBergen

“Our distribution network is engrained in communities, so it’s inevitable that we will feel the impact of community spread of COVID-19. However, our team members are resilient and continue to perform day in and day out despite workplace challenges and personal stressors. Processes we set early in the pandemic to prioritize our team’s wellbeing continue to this day. In our distribution centers, we’re maintaining protocols to emphasize health and safety, and that includes a paid-time-off policy for those needing to self-quarantine or care for loved ones. To further alleviate personal challenges our teams are managing, we’ve made available backup dependent care, mental and physical health resources, and financial support for our team members—or their family members—who may have contracted the virus or whose household income was impacted. All our facilities are currently operational, but we have emergency plans in place in case COVID-19 closures are necessary or supply chain disruptions impact any part of our network. We have made significant investments in our distribution network’s IT infrastructure over the past several years. These IT system enhancements and processes allow us to seamlessly transfer orders to alternate distribution centers for continuity, if necessary.”



Jessica Donati, Vice President of Consumer Products, AmerisourceBergen

“The latest COVID-19 wave has resulted in supply chain disruptions for consumers from half-stocked shelves to no availability of over-the-counter COVID-19 tests due to increased demand. Contributing factors to consumer product shortages include rising raw goods costs and limited supply. However, with the rapidly rising COVID-19 infections among workers, a new challenge is introduced resulting in substantial labor shortages. In some instances, whole teams are out sick, and it isn’t possible to automate these processes. Every partner in the pharmaceutical supply chain is doing their part to manage current patient needs and the long-term needs of the supply chain nationwide and globally. AmerisourceBergen has made it a priority to keep in constant communication with manufacturers to buy in-demand inventory as quickly as possible, meet increased orders from customers and ensure supply chain stability for future patient needs.”

Matt Wolf, Senior Vice President, Commercial Solutions, AmerisourceBergen

“Operating pre-pandemic, inventory for health systems was highly predictable and last-mile delivery didn’t present as many obstacles as today. Not exactly knowing when the next wave may hit or even its magnitude, presents unique logistics problems. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that the omicron variant now accounts for [95% of new coronavirus cases in the U.S.](#), and hospitals are depleted caring for the [sheer volume of patients](#) entering the ER. To keep up with surges, a significant number of health systems are rethinking the just-in-time inventory model and keeping significant stock of critical resources on hand to avoid scarcity. We are seeing hospital customers turning empty office spaces into their own supply centers and considering standing up their own central distribution facilities. We have seen other customers turn to splitting warehouses with other integrated delivery networks to ensure no part of their system has shortages.”

Jenni Zilka, President of Good Neighbor Pharmacy

“Independent community pharmacies have been at the forefront of the pandemic since the very beginning—and have gone above and beyond on the frontlines, providing testing, vaccinations, and continuous care to their communities. They continue to play an integral role by providing timely guidance to their patients and giving back to their communities. With an uptick in cases, the availability of oral antiviral pills at pharmacies is critical—further positioning pharmacies to be true health care destinations with the ability to test, vaccinate and dispense COVID-19 antiviral treatments for patients. Streamlining these crucial healthcare services to one central and trusted location will support the overall patient experience with the Omicron variant and beyond.”

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