

# CAPITALISING ON THE UNIQUE VALUE OF MEDICAL AFFAIRS

Pharmaceutical companies face complex challenges that the Medical Affairs function is uniquely positioned to help overcome. Specifically, Medical Affairs teams can:

- **Interact** meaningfully with physicians
- **Simplify** decision complexity for physicians
- **Create** internal value

## THE CHALLENGES

### **Interact** It is increasingly difficult for pharma to access physicians and interact meaningfully with them

Physicians face complex treatment paradigms, with more and more treatment options to choose from and increasing demands on their time. It is increasingly challenging for pharmaceutical sales teams to access physicians and effectively support them to understand the benefits of different types of treatments. Physicians seek medically informed peer-to-peer conversations that sales teams are unable to provide. It is therefore critical for pharma companies to access and communicate with physicians in a way that is impactful for them and addresses their specific needs, to enable them to deliver optimal care for patients.

### **Simplify** Physicians must integrate data from multiple sources and stakeholders to make care decisions

When making a treatment decision, there is both an increasing volume of information available to physicians, such as from digital technology, electronic patient-reported outcomes (ePROs) and social media, and an increasing number of stakeholders to consider. For example, patients are becoming more involved in their care decisions, along with key opinion leaders (KOLs) and patient advocacy groups (PAGs). Physicians need support in extracting relevant insights from these diverse sources to inform their decision-making. It is therefore important for pharma to build and maintain an understanding of these inputs to enable physicians to leverage them for effective decision-making.

### **Create Value** The role of Medical Affairs is undervalued by R&D and Commercial

R&D and Commercial leaders often do not fully appreciate the value Medical Affairs can bring to development and commercial decision-making. This means that Medical Affairs is often perceived as a support function and is excluded from key decisions. It is increasingly important for Medical Affairs to be involved in cross-functional collaboration, to bridge the gap between R&D and Commercial and incorporate the physician and patient perspective into internal decision-making.

## THE UNIQUE VALUE OF MEDICAL AFFAIRS

### **Interact** Credibility to lead valuable physician discussions

Medical Affairs teams have years of practical experience in navigating complex treatment paradigms. This gives them credibility to form trusted relationships with physicians and deliver a level of insight that is not possible from pharma sales teams. Medical Affairs can communicate evidence to physicians in a way that is valuable for them and ensure this evidence is integrated into day-to-day clinical practice to improve patient outcomes.

### **Simplify** Knowledge and relationships that support physicians with effective decision-making

Medical Affairs has an in-depth understanding of physician and patient beliefs and behaviours. They also have access to an extended network of influencers, in particular KOLs, academia and PAGs. They can leverage this network and their knowledge to understand a range of data sources and advocate for best practices, supporting physicians in making informed, individualised decisions for their patients.

## **Create Value** Unique capabilities and perspective to inform R&D and commercial strategies

Medical Affairs has a unique mix of scientific, medical, and commercially relevant skillsets. They can communicate a compelling story of the most important unmet needs for patients and physicians, to create a unified view across the organisation. Through effective cross-functional collaboration, they can positively contribute to strategic decision-making as the internal advocates for patients and physicians.

## **IMPERATIVES FOR FUTURE MEDICAL AFFAIRS IMPACT**

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### **Interact** Tailor physician discussions to address specific needs

- *Ensure Medical Science Liaisons are at the forefront of physician interactions*, bringing relevant data and practical insights to ensure discussions are productive and impactful
- *Segment physicians based on their preferences*, for example favoured product attributes or appetite for new therapies, to allow tailoring of discussions to maximise value for each physician

### **Simplify** Continuously develop knowledge and share insights to improve physician decision-making

- *Create a compelling medical narrative* for each asset and indication, compiling insights from a range of data sources and stakeholders to enable pharma companies to deliver a consistent message to customers
- *Develop an in-depth understanding of the patient journey and experience*, including exploring advancing technologies such as AI analytics, to identify gaps in care systems and treatment protocols and enable pharma companies to prioritise activities based on need
- *Pioneer digital innovation that supports physicians and patients* by building digital tools with external partners to facilitate physician decision-making, and empower patients to better understand their disease and access optimal care

### **Create Value** Evolve team ways of working to optimise cross-functional collaboration

- *Position the function as a strategic partner* by integrating medical insights into both R&D and Commercial, to facilitate more effective, patient-centric decision-making
- *Build holistic measures to demonstrate tangible impact on physician knowledge and behaviour*, leveraging a range of key performance indicators across the product life cycle to reinforce the critical role of Medical Affairs
- *Equip Medical Affairs with the capabilities* needed to meet the requirements of physicians and maximise the positive value they create for pharma companies (e.g. data science expertise, an understanding of relevant medical technologies, and leadership skills), and continuously advance capabilities to adapt to changing needs

## **CONCLUSION**

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Pharma companies should capitalise on the unique value of the Medical Affairs function to address changing physician, patient, and organisational requirements. Novasecta supports pharmaceutical leaders to embed operational excellence in their organisations. For Medical Affairs, operational excellence is a critical enabler of meaningful physician interactions, a consistent medical narrative, and effective cross-functional decision-making.