

Flip the Pharmacy—Is it Working?

Now that we have completed a full two years of progressions, change packages, and coaching for our Cohort 1 pharmacies and finishing year one for Cohort 2, it is natural for one to ask if Flip the Pharmacy is working. Based on our data of e-care plans submitted, my answer to that question is unequivocally—YES! As we are all aware, the Flip the Pharmacy Coordinating Center had to make several timely adjustments in the progressions due to either market pressures (Opioids) or to the pandemic (Immunizations). Before the pandemic hit all of us as hard as it did, Flip the Pharmacy pharmacies had a larger average number of e-care plans submitted compared to nonparticipating CPESN pharmacies—but this was not even the most compelling reason why I believe FtP has been and continues to be successful. Most compelling to me is that during the COVID-19 Pandemic the average rate of e-care plans submitted continued to widen between those pharmacies participating in Flip the Pharmacy versus nonparticipating pharmacies.

Two of my pharmacies participated in Cohort 1—Iowa City and Solon Towncrest. I can tell you first-hand that we were stretched unbelievably during the pandemic, as were most community pharmacies. Although the pharmacy was stressed and continues to be so, our practice transformation allowed us to weather the stress and still provide enhanced services along with the clinical documentation and e-care plan submissions. That is how I know that Flip the Pharmacy is working because pharmacies have the infrastructure to be stressed and yet continue to provide patient care along with the required documentation, or care planning. The six domains that we emphasize for practice transformation—Med Sync plus ABM (Appointment-Based Model), ongoing follow-up and monitoring, optimal use of non-pharmacist personnel, optimal use of technology, collaborative working relationship with other providers, and a new business model supporting enhanced services—continue to be key components of practice transformation along with the motivation and commitment from Practice Transformation Leads and Coaches, and the participating pharmacies with their staff.

I am also experiencing more discussion with payers, other providers, health systems, and local employers about partnering with our pharmacy because they see benefits from working with us—which has been highlighted with the pandemic. Community pharmacy is no longer on the outside looking in—we are becoming more and more part of the discussion and a member of the health care team. In Iowa, we have several payer models that have emerged recently—something that was just a thought and a hope five years ago.

It is exciting to be a community pharmacist with these new opportunities made possible because our practice has been transformed. As I reflect on the past two years, I confidently believe that Flip the Pharmacy has been a game changer not only for Towncrest Pharmacies but all pharmacies participating in the transformation program.