

Not Giving Up, Nor Giving In

This past week, I closed a class action lawsuit/arbitration against one of the top three pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) after almost 10 years of this fight. Although on the surface some would say that nothing got accomplished with this lawsuit/arbitration, anyone who knows the story knows that much more was accomplished than any of us could have imagined. For me, just standing up to the PBMs gave me new strength, a new focus, a new desire. Prior to the lawsuit, I had given in and given up—the PBMs had defeated me. Once it decided to stand up and fight, I had a new purpose and growing passion to strive to demonstrate the value and essentiality of community pharmacy practice. Here is what we accomplished during that time:

1. Legislation was introduced, passed, and adopted to provide more oversight and transparency to PBMs that were doing business in Iowa.
2. The largest payer in the state was challenged to look at community pharmacy differently and created a bonus incentive program to pay pharmacists for the care they provide to patients **IN ADDITION** to product distribution. The initial program was a three-year study that has demonstrated a significant cost savings that it is becoming a full benefit.
3. The work with the payer, led to discussions for the need of a high performing network of community pharmacists. This led to discussions with Community Care of North Carolina which eventually led to CPESN® USA and CPESN Iowa.
4. The Community Pharmacy Foundation provided a grant to Towncrest Pharmacy to assist 9 community practice sites in Iowa to transform their practices to support the provision of enhanced patient care services—this provided a foundation for the six domains that are part of Flip the Pharmacy.

What all this has taught me is that one person can make a difference. Although the initial action may not seem like much—the energy it creates will create changes that one cannot fathom at the outset.

The changes that all of you are making in your practices are making differences in your patients, in your staff, in your community. The care you provide impacts the whole system. Continue to push yourself during those hard times—perhaps a decision you make will create a new energy that positively disrupts community pharmacy practice and a new movement emerges.