

## **“Reflections”**

Every December I take time to reflect on the past year focusing on the “wins” for CPESN Networks, Flip the Pharmacy, and community pharmacy in general. At this time last year, CPESN network pharmacies were beginning to receive and provide COVID-19 vaccinations, new relationships were being developed with the CDC at the national level, public health departments at the state level, and multiple organizations at the local level. Community pharmacies were recognized as a solution to the pandemic. By end of first quarter of 2021, CPESN pharmacies were major players in the vaccination efforts of our country. Additionally, many CPESN pharmacies became involved in COVID-19 testing as an enhanced service for their communities. More recently, our network members are participating in providing monoclonal antibody (MAB) treatments. Even with this as our backdrop, CPESN pharmacies still provided their standard patient care services, continued to participate successfully in payer programs, and submitted e-care plans. The same is true for those pharmacies participating in Flip the Pharmacy. They continued to transform their practices while taking on the challenges of the pandemic.

Too many times, I hear other providers (pharmacists included) who tell me that pharmacists in the community setting do not provide direct patient care or clinical services. This is just not true. In fact, where would our communities be today if we were not part of the solution to the pandemic. I would also like to add that we had to do all of this being cognizant of our employees and patients’ safety, watching our cash flow and operations closely, and adding new services to an already stressed system. Perhaps that is why I am an owner, I understand the challenges and obstacles to ownership, but also greatly respect the critical thinking, problem-solving, and business savvy needed to be successful as a community pharmacy owner.

So, as we end this year, each one of us should take pride in our 2021 accomplishments. The challenge was presented to us, and we not only engaged, but we exceeded expectations. The pandemic will not last forever (we hope), but the success we had this past year should and will lead to new opportunities. I am confident that all of us will continue to meet the challenges head on and demonstrate our tremendous value to our patients, our communities, and our health care system.

I wish all of you Happy Holidays and a New Year filled with much hope, opportunity, and success.