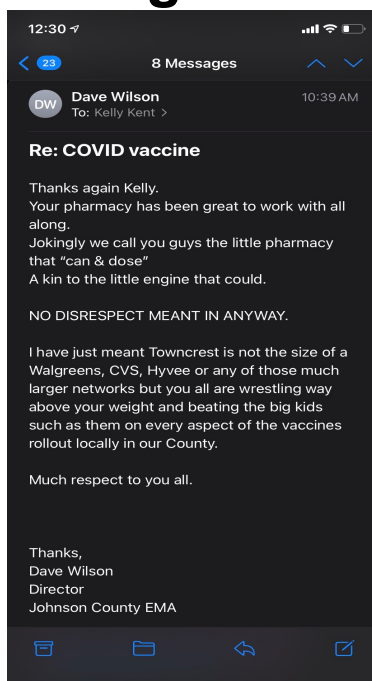


“The Little Engine That Could”



The other day, Towncrest Pharmacy received a text from Dave Wilson, the Director of our County’s Emergency Management Agency (see picture). We had just finished a two-day COVID-19 vaccination clinic, in which we vaccinated 1,146 individuals. The clinic was held in Solon, Iowa, a town that boasts a population of just under 3,000 citizens that—much like Towncrest Pharmacy—“wrestles way above their weight.”

We found out on Thursday, February 18th that 1,170 doses of Pfizer Vaccine were being shipped to us from the CPESN USA Federal Retail Pharmacy Program. The challenge was that we had to have an 80% burn-rate in seven days and 100% in ten days. That is when the “little engine” left the station.

Before we even knew that we were going to get vaccine from the Federal Pharmacy Program, we had a citizen from Solon who was organizing a list of seniors. She was tenacious in her persistence in making sure that when we received vaccines—she had individuals ready.

So, when we knew we were getting the vaccine, it was just natural for us to reach out to our contacts in Solon as they consistently messaged us about their readiness.

On Friday February 19th, we met with one of our pharmacist colleagues in Solon who also oversees the senior advocacy program for the town. In collaboration with her church, they agreed to provide us with their family life center which has a large gymnasium. Now we had the place, but the work was just beginning. Starting on Monday, February 22nd, we started having daily meetings that included, Towncrest Pharmacy, Seven senior advocate groups in Johnson and Linn Counties, the County

EMA and public health department, the County's Sheriff's Department, Solon's Public Works Department, and whole lot of volunteers. In the four days leading to the vaccination clinic, we figured out parking, flow of traffic, golf carts to transport our more-frail elderly, flow into family life center, registration, vaccine reconstitution, vaccination process, observational area, and checkout. It was through our daily meetings and sharing that a new issue would be brought up—but addressed effectively and efficiently. By the end of Thursday, we had over 800 individuals signed up with our registration link going live to increase our numbers to at least 1000. We had 50 to 70 volunteers to help us which included medical and non-medical individuals. We also had pharmacy students from the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy volunteer and served a variety of roles including that of vaccinators.

The hours of the clinics were 9 to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. on both Friday and Saturday, February 19th and 20th. We vaccinated 550 individuals on Friday and almost 600 on Saturday. We had 24 doses left over and we worked with our senior advocate groups who helped us do a smaller clinic the following Tuesday, thus hitting our 100% completion rate.

As I was in charge of the gymnasium where the vaccinations were occurring, I had the chance to talk to many of the individuals who received their vaccination. I was moved by their emotions that sometimes just took over the conversation. There were tears and laughter, but more importantly a tremendous sense of caring. **I have done a lot of great things in my career—but this one is my highlight.**

Although Towncrest Pharmacy was referred to as the “Little Engine That Could”—it wasn't “us,” it was “we!” This successful event was because of our community engagement, our work with key organizations, stakeholders, and health care providers. This could not have been pulled off by any one of us—it took the “whole” of the parts to make this event successful. I am proud to be a Community Pharmacist with the key term being “community.”