

Pharmacy Transitions

New Opportunities are Before Us!

It is interesting to note that we are witnessing some rather important transitions occurring in pharmacy. One of the transitions that I thought I would not see in my career—is the perceptions from a variety of stakeholders (patients, other health care providers, legislators, and regulators) of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). This has been a battle for me and my business partners for almost a decade resulting in us filing a class action arbitration against one of the big three PBMs. I have presented my viewpoint to CMS, FTC, DOJ, and on a panel sponsored by the American Economic Liberties and NCPA. What impressed me most during these public presentations is the common stories that multiple stakeholders had about the business practices of PBMs and the negative impact it has on patient care. This is a time for all community-based pharmacy practitioners to advocate strongly and with loud voices to our local, state, and national legislators. Change needs to happen in this area of pharmacy practice and patient care and every voice counts (pharmacists, technicians, CHW, and other pharmacy personnel). This is our opportunity to impact the future of community pharmacy practice.

Another transition that has occurred is moving from the COVID-19 pandemic to an endemic. Initially, it may have felt that this transition is negatively affecting our practices with loss of revenue. On the contrary, due to the impact community pharmacists have had on patient care, community pharmacists have a tremendous opportunity to build on their work during the pandemic. Community leaders/stakeholders have witnessed and experienced the services, skills, and knowledge that community-based pharmacists and their staff have contributed during COVID-19—whether it be vaccines, point-of-care testing, or other enhanced services, community pharmacies stepped up to be a solution for communities. Now we need to capitalize on our work during the pandemic to demonstrate our abilities to help our patients optimize their medications. We are a solution to the medication-related problems that plague our current health care system. In fact, it is our accessibility to patients and our clinical knowledge and skills that make community pharmacists and their staff ideal solutions to help patients optimize their medications.

Although we are still not without our challenges as community-based pharmacy practitioners—we have some exciting opportunities and it is up to each and every

one of us to embrace and maximize them. I am more confident today then I was five years ago of my practice's long-term viability and sustainability. It doesn't mean that there will not be more bumps in the road, but rather new routes and highlights that will make the road easier to navigate. Now is the time to take advantage of the opportunities before us!!