

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON SCHOOL OF PHARMACY STUDENT WRITING CLUB:

Business Member Spotlight: Boscobel Pharmacy

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Day to Day Practice

Boscobel Pharmacy is a full-service pharmacy, committed to offering a consistent care process to each patient who walks through the door. Services offered range from dispensing, medication flavoring, and compounding, to offering durable medical equipment, nebulizers, sleep apnea supplies, portable oxygen, and hospital beds. The pharmacists take pride in meeting patient and community needs, and having the supplies to do so.

The day-to-day work environment is best described as dynamic, with staff maintaining the flexibility to crossover between departments in emergencies or staffing challenges. Along with the three staff pharmacists, Boscobel Pharmacy employs seven pharmacy technician full time equivalents (FTEs), five pharmacy assistant FTEs, and two bookkeeping FTEs. The bookkeeping department is tasked with issues that take longer to resolve. Some examples include prior authorizations or insurance complications that are outside of the technician workflow. This allows technicians to spend more time focusing directly on patient needs. Pharmacy assistants conduct over-the-counter product and gift merchandising as well as marketing activities. Boscobel Pharmacy believes that having many “prongs in the wheel” improves the patient care process.

Michelle Farrell, PharmD, BCACP, began her career as a pharmacist at Boscobel pharmacy in 2000, and became owner of the pharmacy in 2011. Dr. Farrell grew up in a nearby community, and finds her practice especially rewarding due to the relationships she is able to establish with her patients. She remains active on the Boscobel Chamber of Commerce, is a former President of the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW), and current Chairman of the Board. Her membership and involvement with PSW

has shaped and informed her pharmacy practice throughout the years. For example, Dr. Farrell recalls the movement toward immunization legislation when she graduated from pharmacy school. Since that time, PSW has progressed to dialogue concerning collaborative practice and non-vaccine injectables. Ideas and implementation designs for many of Boscobel Pharmacy’s programs including medication synchronization, immunization protocols, refill agreements, therapeutic substitution agreements, and most recently a tobacco cessation collaborative practice agreement, were provided by PSW. Additionally, the Wisconsin Pharmacy Quality Collaborative (WPQC) program has shaped the patient care process, improved transitions of care and comprehensive medication reviews, and enhanced safety in Boscobel Pharmacy. Finally, Dr. Farrell particularly values the networking opportunities and awareness that PSW has provided her practice.

Raising the Bar

Dr. Farrell and her team at Boscobel Pharmacy are improving patient care in many ways and exploring new pharmacy practice models. Currently, they are participating in the PSW pilot program: Tech-Check-Tech. Over the past year, two pharmacy technicians have become Tech-Check-Tech certified, and four additional technicians are completing requirements. By implementing Tech-Check-Tech, it has allowed the pharmacists at Boscobel Pharmacy to focus on and expand patient care programs like the comprehensive medication reviews, immunizations, and medication synchronization.

Besides working on internal projects, Boscobel pharmacy has maintained a strong connection with local hospitals and clinics to further improve the patient experience. The relationship established with Gundersen Boscobel Area Health

Care allows the pharmacy Epic link access, ensuring smooth transitions of care. The pharmacy team works with clinic nurses to coordinate adherence issues and medical equipment needs. Collaboration with physicians involves three currently established protocols. Other ties to the community include a scholarship offered for high school seniors and shadowing opportunities designed with the hopes of increasing interest in rural health care careers.

Bumps in the Road

Boscobel Pharmacy has implemented many successful practice model changes; however, making effective changes requires effort. For successful change, Dr. Farrell realizes the need for open discussion and a staff willing to embrace change and try new approaches. When incorporating new care models, a consistent message is important so that all staff members are aware of the terminology, the perception of what is being offered, and what the new process involves. Dr. Farrell has learned with experience that there will be gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed. She now incorporates monthly staff meetings over lunch to talk about new services and problems as they arise. The pharmacy strives to offer services longitudinally such as immunization reviews and nicotine cessation, and staff education on how to incorporate these services into the patient encounter is highly valued and prioritized.

Finding time and resources to ensure consistent training and implementation takes place while continuing to offer the established level of care is very challenging. Practice advancement and project management can be difficult to fit into a busy pharmacist’s schedule. Dr. Farrell has addressed this through involvement in the University of Wisconsin Community Pharmacy Residency Program. The skills needed to implement novel patient care



Above: Boscobel Pharmacy Staff

services are evolving and residents are at the cutting edge from both a clinical and technological standpoint. Dr. Farrell believes that Community Pharmacy residents are uniquely poised to drive innovation.

Another challenge faced by Boscobel Pharmacy is the threat of losing patients due to Medicare Part D preferred provider policies. This obstacle initially seemed insurmountable as financial impact is a powerful motivator for patients to go elsewhere. Boscobel Pharmacy has faced this issue directly by affirming commitment to operating as a full service pharmacy that provides comprehensive care. By providing services and consultations in a consistent manner, Dr. Farrell has seen patients return to Boscobel Pharmacy after trying a preferred provider and missing the conveniences and services offered through Boscobel.

Dr. Farrell admits her biggest fear when implementing new services is how to offer a uniform and dependable service that will be welcomed by the community and work in synchrony with the existing health care resources. The strategies she has developed to address this fear allow Boscobel Pharmacy to move forward and face new challenges.

Moving Forward

Boscobel Pharmacy is optimistic about the future. Due to a successful practice model, prescription volume continues to rise, which is a boost to the pharmacy. The pharmacy is also seeking out more opportunities to expand into the pharmacy services sector. In 2012, the pharmacy was remodeled to include two sit down areas for immunizations, medication reviews, and counseling on Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines. The possibility of provider status, combined with these patient care services, will help the pharmacy evolve to meet patient needs and be part of a value-based care model. To foster communication with customers and patients, the pharmacy is fully embracing technology using Facebook, a mobile app, their website, and email.

Transitioning from a more traditional pharmacy to one with advanced practices is challenging. In giving advice to other pharmacies that want to implement more services, Dr. Farrell suggests finding the biggest “headache” within your day – whether that be prescription workflow, or a person that calls the pharmacy multiple times a day. After that, develop a strategy to address this problem with everyone’s input, so all staff are on board with the change.

As part of the remodel, Boscobel Pharmacy addressed a relevant issue of location of prescriptions and prescription bags. This may sound simple, but even a new bagging system can lead to a big impact and reduce stress for staff. These changes lead to a “buy in” for others, moving the pharmacy forward.

Dr. Farrell sees the future of the pharmacy, and pharmacy as a whole, as a culture that takes care of the whole patient, not just refills. No one has said that the transformation of pharmacy practice would be easy, as there are and will be stresses, but the process should be embraced. Dr. Farrell sees exciting things in the future of pharmacy and by embracing that belief, she is advancing pharmacy practice and improving patient care.

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