

# Up Front: Working Together for a Better Tomorrow

by Melissa Theesfeld, PharmD

# 2021



**T**he calendar is turning to 2021, bringing a sense of excitement, hope, and a bit of uncertainty for what lies ahead. Like many of you, I feel some relief that 2020 has come to a close. The significant amount of change that we have navigated in our personal and professional lives has been positive and rewarding in many ways, but also mentally and physically exhausting. Yet I am optimistic for what we will accomplish in the year to come – both as health care providers and as an organization.

Pharmacists, technicians, and students have been vital in distributing and administering the COVID-19 vaccine in recent weeks. Our roles will become even more important in the coming months as the need for educating and vaccinating the broader population expands. Our accessibility in communities will be critical so that patients have access to all vaccines and corresponding facts to inform their decisions. We are always needed to help patients get the medications and care they need in a safe and effective manner. And we can continue in our role as public health advocates, modeling good practices for our patients, other health care professionals, and our communities.

As pharmacy professionals in Wisconsin, we also have exciting new work to look forward to. PSW staff and members have made a significant investment over the last 3 years to advance Wisconsin's pharmacist provider status initiative. In 2021, this work will come to fruition with the introduction of a formal bill to recognize pharmacists as providers and ensure that pharmacists are equitably paid for the services they provide. The partnerships that we have

developed within and outside pharmacy circles will be crucial in generating broad awareness and support for our work. We will need everyone in the profession in Wisconsin to live out our “one voice, one vision” mantra and be unified in the provider status messaging. Operationalizing pharmacist provider status may vary in practices across the state, but this important initiative benefits us all.

As we gear up for a new year, I want all PSW members to be excited for the future! PSW remains an incredibly strong organization. Our financial position is sound and will allow us to support events and initiatives that are important to Wisconsin pharmacy. We have a newly updated strategic plan that is forward-thinking and aims to advance the roles of pharmacists and technicians. We have energetic and engaged members who willingly volunteer their time and expertise. And we have a dedicated, talented team of staff at PSW who are ready to work collaboratively with members and advocate for the profession.

PSW's vision is more important than ever: together we can inspire each other to advance our profession to enhance the lives of our patients. Together we will provide needed education and services to many audiences. Together we will protect and care for our patients. Together we will transform the practice of pharmacy in Wisconsin. I am excited to work with all of you in the coming year and to keep our patients at the center of our work! And with any luck, we will be able to gather in person soon to celebrate our success!

- Melissa Theesfeld, PharmD  
PSW President