

WPQC Spotlight: Community Pharmacy

by Paige Edwards, 2020 PharmD Candidate

Community Pharmacy, conveniently located on State Street in downtown Madison, WI, has been a local favorite since 1972. The pharmacy's wide selection of natural medication alternatives, such as herbs, supplements, and homeopathic remedies, satisfies a growing area of interest for patients. This creates a broadened role for pharmacists at Community Pharmacy to work closely with the supplement department in order to optimize care for patients who are interested in nontraditional medicine. The pharmacists use their expertise on drug interactions to help patients select herbals or supplements that can be used safely with their prescribed medications.

Delegation on Safe and Healthy Aging

United Way of Dane County is a local organization that strives to provide financial, educational, and health related resources to low-income, uninsured members of the community. One of their initiatives, started in 2011, is a Delegation on Safe and Healthy Aging.¹ The delegation works to keep older adults living safely and independently in their homes by reducing emergency room visits and hospitalizations related to adverse drug events and falls. Because the delegation was initially successful, United Way set a goal in 2017 to reduce the rate of adverse drug events and falls leading to emergency room visits and hospitalizations in Dane County 20% by 2022.² United Way uses three main strategies to reach their goal: comprehensive medication reviews (CMRs), in-home safety assessments, and falls prevention classes.² During CMRs, pharmacists make recommendations to reduce adverse drug events and optimize the efficacy of patients' medication regimens.

Community Pharmacy is a Wisconsin Pharmacy Quality Collaborative (WPQC)-

certified pharmacy through the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW). WPQC-certified pharmacists provide CMRs, which is a billable service through Wisconsin Medicaid. United Way partnered with PSW to facilitate WPQC-certified pharmacists to provide CMRs to high-risk, underserved older adults in Dane County. Community Pharmacy has been active in the United Way of Dane County Community Model for three years.¹

Pharmacists' Background

Community Pharmacy pharmacists, Monica Cauble and Aimee Speers, are two active volunteers in the United Way/PSW Community Model. Monica completed her pharmacy school training at the University of Texas-Austin School of Pharmacy. After graduating in 2007, she completed a one year community care/ambulatory care residency, where she spent time training in anti-coagulation and diabetes clinics. Her residency location had its own health plan, which created the opportunity for Monica complete internal medication therapy managements (MTMs) for health plan members. After five years of practicing in Texas, Monica moved to Wisconsin and began working at Community Pharmacy. Monica says she was excited to be in a community pharmacy setting where she could help a broad patient population because she loves talking with patients.

Aimee's pharmacy experience began as a pharmacy clerk and technician when she was 15 years-old. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy in 2005, she began her pharmacy career practicing at an independent community pharmacy with a large geriatric patient population. Following a change in ownership that transitioned the pharmacy into long-term care, Aimee practiced as a long-term care pharmacist for a few years. Aimee is now the Pharmacist in Charge at Community Pharmacy where she enjoys interacting with their diverse patient population. Being an independent community pharmacist has always been

her goal, and helping her community is her passion.

Involvement in the United Way/PSW Community Model

Monica and Aimee walked into their first CMRs feeling ready to jump in and talk with patients. To help prepare, they utilized helpful resources on the PSW website including online training modules, organized CMR templates, and communication tools for making recommendations to providers. Monica recommends completing training on how to use Apresis, which is the software program pharmacists volunteering with the United Way/PSW Community Model use to bill CMR services.



The CMR appointments are a time for pharmacists to both review patients' medications and address patients' individual concerns. For Monica and Aimee, their favorite part about volunteering is seeing how grateful patients are to have their questions answered. Aimee enjoys talking with people from the community and listening to their stories, and says she always feels appreciated by the end of the appointment. Monica and Aimee apply their knowledge about supplements during CMRs by recognizing medications that may be causing nutrient depletions in the patient, and then recommending vitamins or minerals to supplement when appropriate. They are also equipped to answer most supplement related questions and to provide alternative medication recommendations to interested patients.

The United Way/PSW Community Model also has volunteering opportunities for second and third-year pharmacy students to gain experience providing



Above: Street view of Community Pharmacy in downtown Madison, WI.

CMRs. CMR events are promoted to students through the Wisconsin Society of Pharmacy Students (WSPS) by a student liaison. Some of the students' roles include taking patients' blood pressure, learning how to analyze patients' medication lists, and helping the pharmacist document and bill CMR services.

Making an Impact

One patient visit that especially meaningful for Monica was when she was able to help a man regain control of his hypertension. The patient presented to her with uncontrolled hypertension, likely related to only taking only one of his four prescribed hypertension medications. After communicating with the patient and his care provider, Monica was able to help the patient start a new regimen of two blood pressure medications that the patient was more willing to take. Her intervention helped motivate the patient to start monitoring his blood pressure again while strengthening her relationship with the provider, who was unaware of the patient's noncompliance.

Aimee says she feels like she makes a difference when she is able to address the

patients' concerns, no matter how big or small. During one CMR with an elderly man, Aimee noticed the medications in his medication boxes were not organized, and his medication box maps were not up to date. As a result, the patient was both nonadherent to his medication regimen and was not taking his medications correctly, which could have led to serious complications. Aimee and a student made adjustments to his medication boxes that day, and followed up with the patient's pharmacy so they could update his box maps and find a better way to communicate future medication additions or deletions with the patient. Although it was a simple intervention, the patient was thankful for their help.

The United Way/PSW Community Model utilizes pharmacists' expertise and accessibility to help promote safe and healthy aging for older adults. It also creates an opportunity for pharmacists to advocate for their profession and establishes a safe space for patients to feel comfortable asking questions they would otherwise be unable or unwilling to ask. Patients value the opportunity to meet with a health care professional in an accessible setting, and

pharmacists gain personal satisfaction from the interactions.

In addition to United Way's Delegation on Healthy Aging goals, it's clear to see the positive impact the United Way/PSW Community Model has in the Dane County community. Thankfully there are dedicated pharmacists like Monica and Aimee to help make the program possible.

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References

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2. United Way of Dane County. Spotlight on safe and healthy aging: a family conversation. <https://www.unitedwaydanecounty.org/wp-content/uploads/Safe-and-Healthy-Aging-Mob-Plan-2017-Final.pdf>. Published 2017. Accessed February 2, 2019.