

ROSALIND FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCE COLLEGE OF PHARMACY STUDENT WRITING CLUB:

# Business Member Spotlight: Streu's Pharmacy

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**S**treu's Pharmacy, an independent pharmacy in Green Bay, Wisconsin, has been serving the community since 1954. The organization consists of a community and long-term care pharmacy. Prescription services, durable medical equipment, delivery services, vaccination clinics, screenings and education programs are just a few of the many services they offer. Among the 80 employees are pharmacists, technicians, nurses, delivery drivers, administrative staff and a nutritionist. To better serve

the community, select pharmacists have obtained additional certifications in geriatrics and anticoagulation. In 2005, the pharmacy merged with Bay Natural to provide quality nutritional supplements to support health.

## Involvement

Jeffrey Kirchner, RPh, and CEO of Streu's Pharmacy, described the day-to-day practice of their long-term care and community operations. Streu's Pharmacy manages both their community and long-term care pharmacies in the same

building. The community setting includes the pharmacy, new clinical offices, a classroom, and a natural supplement store. Daily activities include prescription verification, patient education, clinical services, and management activities. In addition, a clinical pharmacist completes comprehensive medication reviews and consultations for nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Aside from staffing as a pharmacist, Mr. Kirchner serves as a visionary for implementing innovative services. His outreach involvement and strong ties to the community allows him to tailor his pharmacy practice to meet the needs of the community. He has been involved with the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW) for a number of years. He joined the organization in the 1980s, starting as a board member on the Long-Term Care Board and later became chairman. After serving PSW through various board positions, he was elected president in 2012. Streu's Pharmacy has had a long history of PSW presidents. It began with the founder of the pharmacy, Dick Streu and later his business partner, Lee Kirchner (Jeff's father). As a third generation PSW president within the business, Mr. Kirchner remains fully immersed in the organization, actively participating in all activities and conventions. He serves as a mentor to various PSW members and enjoys meeting other pharmacists. PSW has allowed him to stay up-to-date and relevant with best practices and gain valuable connections throughout the state.

## Raising the Bar

Since Streu's pharmacy opened 64 years ago, they have always been driven to deliver the best quality care. After the move to a larger facility in 2005, the business continued to expand. Thus, continuous improvement in the workflow was required to meet the increasing demand for long-term care services. A few years

Below: Streu's Pharmacy



ago, the pharmacy received an educational grant to learn lean manufacturing and labor efficiency practices. As part of the educational process, various employees from all departments were selected to participate in the first Kaizen event to work together in a team environment. They reviewed a specific pharmacy practice through a step-by-step process which allowed employees to identify inefficiency and create plans for change. Later, the project was managed and completed according to a set timeline and regular team meetings. Since then, Kaizen events have ultimately helped to lower cost and enhance customer service. More recently, a Kaizen team helped to create a remodeling plan to accommodate new equipment and enhance workflow when the pharmacy invested in new automation for compliance packaging. Today, Kaizen events continue and are initiated to help to move the business forward as new pharmacy services emerge.

Over the years, leaders within the organization have received leadership training from a variety of local resources. Streu's Pharmacy embraces the team concept, as opposed to a traditional corporate hierarchy system. Jeff conducts weekly leadership team meetings to support business strategies. Additional leaders meet regularly to discuss day-to-day operations and short-term goals of pharmacy management. In addition, the organization has leveraged the Servant Leadership model. This model has helped employees develop individualized goals for success. Leaders throughout the organization work to inspire and encourage employees to leverage their gifts and talents to meet their individual needs as well as those of the organization.

Their continued effort for improvement has been critical to their success and distinction from the competition. To manage an independent pharmacy despite the growth of retail chains, they attempt to capitalize on emerging niche markets and products. For instance, flu shots had been offered for many years before leading retail pharmacies offered the service in their community. Today, they have expanded these services by training pharmacists in the administration of long-acting injectable antipsychotic drugs such as Risperdal

Consta and Invega Sustenna/ Invega Trinza and other similar products. These unique services support the community through a comprehensive approach to pharmacy service.

### Challenges

With continued competition from large retail pharmacy chains as well as large LTC pharmacy providers, it is crucial for Streu's Pharmacy to raise the bar by not only improving patient outcomes but by offering new services. Jeff said many of the challenges he faces are not unique to his pharmacy practice. Declining reimbursement from third parties, increased regulation, limited distribution of specialty medications, and payment for clinical services are several he mentioned.

In order to be one step ahead of the competition, the organization has gone the extra mile to train their employees to gain specific skill sets. Both technicians and pharmacists are being challenged with new activities and responsibilities. Tech-Check-Tech is one of the more recent changes that has created new technician roles but has also provided more hours for pharmacists to work in the new clinical service area of the pharmacy. This change has improved the pharmacy's star ratings and they have had a significant increase in the number of billable clinical services provided to patients.

### Moving Forward

Mr. Kirchner plans to expand his clientele by developing more professional relationships with local physician groups. Clinical pharmacists at Streu's Pharmacy are dedicated to serving their patients by taking the time to sit down with each one to provide counseling, assess efficacy and monitor compliance. The pharmacy's investment in their patients is vital in obtaining better patient outcomes. Statistics show that many patients are non-compliant with medications and their pharmacists have a willingness to coach and support them in understanding how medications impact their health. As the analysis of positive patient outcomes becomes widespread, he believes that physicians will note the value in these



clinical services and will begin referring patients to Streu's Pharmacy.

In the future, Mr. Kirchner hopes to grow his business by adapting to the changing healthcare needs of his community, as well as continuing to implement innovative practice techniques to increase efficiency and lower costs. Mr. Kirchner stated that their plan to increase revenue is not necessarily directly correlated with filling more prescriptions. Effectively managing pharmacy practice is also an important means to increase revenue. With the replacement of manual filling by automated machines, technicians have been granted more autonomy and responsibility, allowing the pharmacists more time for patient education and other clinical services. Although change can be challenging, Mr. Kirchner believes it is crucial to the success of his pharmacy practice to continue evolving in this ever-changing healthcare field.

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