

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

Business Member Spotlight: The Medicine Shoppe in Two Rivers

by Amy M. Wolff, 2024 PharmD Candidate, Judy Zheng, 2024 PharmD Candidate

Marvin Moore, PharmD, is the owner of The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, where he also serves as a full-time pharmacist. As the owner of The Medicine Shoppe, Moore has become dedicated to providing exceptional care tailored to his patients' and community's needs. Moore's interest in community pharmacy practice began during an Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) rotation at Marshland Pharmacy in Horicon and Mayville, Wis. It was here that Moore describes having a "lightbulb" moment in which he realized how valuable forming meaningful relationships with patients is to him. Creating these relationships has continued to be a fundamental pillar of Moore's practice as a community pharmacist. Moore graduated with a

PharmD degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2002, and subsequently completed a community pharmacy residency through the University of Iowa. Following this, Moore decided to move back to Wisconsin, where he came into contact with Brian Jensen of The Medicine Shoppe. Upon meeting the Two Rivers community and the staff at The Medicine Shoppe, Moore knew this was the right place for him. Shortly thereafter, he entered into a junior partnership with Jensen for roughly five years and, in 2011, Moore assumed ownership of the pharmacy. Since then, he has worked to expand the services that the pharmacy offers, such as enhancing the immunization services available to patients, implementing a medication synchronization program, and expanding the multi-dose packaging services offered.

Daily Practice & Community Ties

The Medicine Shoppe remains the only independent pharmacy located in Two Rivers, Wis. The pharmacy offers a wide range of services, including traditional dispensing, multi-dose packaging, delivery, blood pressure monitoring, medication synchronization, auto-refill, diabetic shoe fittings, medication therapy management (MTM), and immunizations. These services are made possible by the three pharmacists and 15 support staff members who work to provide quality care to the Two Rivers community.

Two Rivers, Wis. is a small town with a population of 11,000. That small size makes it easy for community members to know each other. Hence, word of mouth is a major method for potential customers to entrust their medication needs to

Below: (left) Owner of The Medicine Shoppe, Marv Moore. (right) The Medicine Shoppe in Two Rivers, WI.





Above: The Medicine Shoppe Staff in Two Rivers, WI.

The Medicine Shoppe. Other means of advertisement include the pharmacy's website and Facebook page.

Moore describes his typical day as similar to that of other community pharmacists throughout Wisconsin, primarily focused on the services listed previously. His day to day activities are largely centered around providing the best possible care to his patients, which he does by tailoring the services offered at The Medicine Shoppe to his community's needs. In fact, The Medicine Shoppe is highly invested in the well-being of the community, which has allowed for deep ties to be formed. Many staff members are committed to supporting and sponsoring local events. Moore has been a member of the Kiwanis Club (an organization consisting of volunteers dedicated to serving their communities) for the past 18 years, acting as the president for the past three years. He also serves on the board of directors for the Chamber of Manitowoc County and has served on the board of directors and as president of Two Rivers Main Street.

Additionally, The Medicine Shoppe is willing and eager to foster the learning of future pharmacists. The pharmacy is both an Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPPE) site and an APPE site for pharmacy students. Moore encourages current pharmacy students to gain as many experiences in IPPEs and APPEs as possible

and find a practice that will ignite their inner passion. Local high school students are also encouraged to shadow in the pharmacy, if interested. Moore is actively involved in the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW), where he serves on the Community Pharmacy Advisory Committee. He makes it a point to promote PSW to any student that completes a rotation at The Medicine Shoppe. In addition, his wife, Joylyn Moore, PharmD, serves on the PSW Board of Directors. Through these roles, the Moores have continued to foster growth and advancement in the practice of pharmacy in the state of Wisconsin.

Pursuit of Excellence

At The Medicine Shoppe, Moore makes great effort to implement best practices whenever possible. The pharmacy has been a part of the Community Pharmacy Enhanced Services Networks (CPESN) and Flip the Pharmacy, both programs aimed at advancing pharmacy services and delivering a higher level of care to patients. Moore claims that the key to success is "knowing our patients really well and making sure we are meeting their needs." He acknowledges that each patient's needs are unique and ensures the staff at The Medicine Shoppe are trained to tailor their services to the individual.

Similar to other independent pharmacies, staff, often without a

background in pharmacy, receive on-the-job training. Employees develop skills through day-to-day experience and patient interactions to become an asset to the Two Rivers community. Moore strives to hire the right person and find the right role for the individual; he places emphasis on the applicant's attitude as opposed to aptitude. The Medicine Shoppe has experienced continued success largely due to the pharmacy team's dedication to place patients first and having the best intentions for them. The staff focuses on treating people the way they want to be treated and a willingness to work alongside patients to resolve a problem regardless of its magnitude.

Since taking on the ownership of The Medicine Shoppe, Moore has made "small successes every day" from figuring out how to take care of patients to empowering patients to become actively engaged in the management of their health. The work done by the pharmacy staff does not go unnoticed by the Two Rivers community. These residents know that they can safely place their medication needs in the hands of the Medicine Shoppe pharmacy team and trust that they will be taken care of.

Overcoming Obstacles

The Medicine Shoppe has been serving patients for the past 30 years, but that accomplishment has not come without

challenges. One major challenge The Medicine Shoppe currently faces is the decline in reimbursement for traditional pharmacy dispensing services. While The Medicine Shoppe is proud to offer a wide range of other services, traditional dispensing still remains the pharmacy's primary source of revenue. This creates a conflict when trying to expand new services that may not yet have the ability to generate much revenue, but are needed in the community. To tackle this issue, The Medicine Shoppe has learned to complete traditional dispensing tasks as efficiently as possible, leaving time for new initiatives.

Another notable challenge that The Medicine Shoppe has recently experienced centers on the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the vaccine rollout began, Moore was motivated by his desire to protect the Two Rivers community and immediately jumped on board. The Medicine Shoppe, similar to other pharmacies, would not know the amount of vaccines they would receive on any given Monday until the Wednesday of the week prior. This meant that no appointments could be scheduled until that Wednesday, leaving only a few days to fill the spots for the following week. In addition, to accommodate all patients, The Medicine Shoppe opted to keep the COVID-19 vaccine scheduling process manual. This meant that no app or website was used; rather, appointments were scheduled over the phone by staff at The Medicine Shoppe. This required a great deal of additional staff time, but the effort was greatly appreciated by the Two Rivers community, especially older adults without internet access. Despite the many challenges faced as a result of COVID-19 vaccinations, Moore is thankful that The Medicine Shoppe had the opportunity to be a part of the solution to an ongoing pandemic.

The Medicine Shoppe was among a select group of pharmacies to receive the William Penn Foundation (WPF) grant to advance racial equity and racial justice for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. The fund helped to offset initial costs and minimize financial barriers that impede the pharmacy's ability to vaccinate the community. As a result, Moore and his team were able to target a wider range of individuals, especially those who encountered barriers to access the vaccines. It further enabled the pharmacy staff to focus on individual patients and

ensure their needs were met despite the ongoing pandemic. Moore expresses that the WPF grant allowed The Medicine Shoppe staff to truly gain a sense of urgency and reinforce their commitment to the Two Rivers community.

While Moore knows that implementing any new service will always have its challenges, he firmly believes that one of the most important things to consider first is whether or not there is a need in the community. If there is truly a need, Moore is determined to do everything possible to make that service accessible for his patients. Moore acknowledges that he rarely fears new opportunities or challenges, and instead remains optimistic and ready for the benefits that something new may bring to the pharmacy.

Plans to Expand

At the present time, The Medicine Shoppe has no major plans for growth. The pharmacy's primary objective is to continue its current services and focus on keeping the doors open amid ongoing challenges. However, Moore has plans to shift the pharmacy team's task dynamic in order to better accommodate patient needs and to continue to provide them with exceptional care. He expects to implement changes that will ultimately expand pharmacy technician roles to free up pharmacists' time. This will enable pharmacists to maximize their expertise in medications, permitting them to focus on providing MTM, counseling, and building rapport with patients.

Advice for Independent Pharmacy Ownership

To pharmacies looking to implement practice advancement initiatives, Moore emphasizes the importance of doing your homework to thoroughly understand market needs. Like a true entrepreneur, he understands the large initial investment of time and resources required to implement any new services. As a business owner and community member, Moore is always ready and willing to step up when a need arises that is not filled or not properly filled.

To those considering independent pharmacy ownership, Moore stresses the significance of honing the ability to communicate with people of various backgrounds. At the pharmacy, the staff

interacts with patients, other health care providers (HCPs) and staff members, and students on a daily basis. He makes it a point that strong communication is the key to getting to know people and their needs. Each patient is unique in that their skill sets and understanding of medications are different and their interests in how the medications will impact their body or other aspects of their lives. Having strong communication ensures the staff at The Medicine Shoppe can uniquely tailor their services to any individual patient needs. Thus, for anyone, student and practicing professional alike, there is always room to improve your communication skills.

Amy Wolff and Judy Zheng are 2024 Doctor of Pharmacy Candidates at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy in Madison, WI.