

WPQC Spotlight: Thad Schumacher, Fitchburg Family Pharmacy COVID-19 and TB Clinics

by Kristen South, 2021 PharmD Candidate

With the deadline approaching to renew an annual health requirement and options limited, several pharmacy students felt frustrated with their lack of choices for affordable tuberculosis (TB) skin testing. Under normal circumstances, the UW-Madison School of Pharmacy hosts a yearly clinic where students are provided with the skin test at no charge. Due to COVID-19, this year was different, with no school clinic nor affordable tests available via appointment at University Health Services. That's when Thad Schumacher, owner of Fitchburg Family Pharmacy, decided to step-in.

Thad Schumacher, PharmD, graduated from Creighton University School of Pharmacy in 1996. He came to the Madison area in 2008 and had the opportunity to open Fitchburg Family Pharmacy in the summer of 2013, with the mission "of serving the Madison area

population with personal attention to individual needs." Growing up, Thad interacted with an independent pharmacist in his small town in rural Illinois, and he got the impression that community pharmacists could really get to know their patients and help them in a way that could make a difference.

Pharmacy practice certainly has changed over the past decade, and pharmacists are continuing to push forward with change. Fitchburg Family Pharmacy is WPQC-accredited, meaning that Thad is able to spend more time directly with patients providing comprehensive medication review and assessment services (CMR/As) through the PSW's Wisconsin Pharmacy Quality Collaborative (WPQC) program. His pharmacy is also a part of the Wisconsin Community Pharmacy Enhanced Services Network (CPESN), where independent pharmacies across the state collaborate to improve patient outcomes. Through his participation in

both of these programs, Thad has opened up his pharmacy practice for patient care beyond prescriptions.

The pandemic certainly hasn't been easy for anyone, but Thad and his staff have stepped up to the challenge. Before the COVID-19 pandemic closures, Thad closed his pharmacy to foot traffic and implemented curbside pick-up to keep his staff and patients safe. Even before COVID-19 hit, Thad and his staff were exceeding patient expectations with free same-day delivery services to the surrounding areas.

TB Clinics

Over two weekends in April and May, Fitchburg Family Pharmacy hosted four TB testing clinics after store hours to ensure as many pharmacy students as possible could receive tests by the required deadline. Two hundred skin tests were administered by three pharmacists, including Thad.

Prior to April 2020, neither Thad nor his staff pharmacist, Matt Huppert, had any previous experience providing this service. They had to overcome many barriers to make these clinics a success. First and foremost was establishing a Collaborative Practice Agreement (CPA) with a physician to receive delegation to provide this service. Thanks to the hard work done by the determined staff at Fitchburg Family Pharmacy and a physician with whom they have an established relationship, this barrier was overcome in less than 72 hours. Next came training on administering the skin test itself, Standard Operating Procedure protocols that incorporated COVID-19 guidelines, a cost analysis, a payment agreement with the UW-Madison School of Pharmacy, and acquisition of testing supplies and the skin tests themselves. Tasks were split up between team members and Dani Huppert, registered nurse and wife of pharmacist Matt, trained the team on proper administration and reading

Below: Matt Huppert, PharmD, administers a tuberculosis (TB) skin test to a UW-Madison School of Pharmacy Student.



Interview with Thad

How has pharmacy practice changed over the last 10 years?

Pharmacists in Wisconsin have pushed forward with pharmacy practice initiatives. We have embraced the ability to provide non-vaccine injections at our pharmacy. Pharmacy is continuing to evolve with the goal of giving the pharmacist more time to provide direct patient care – Technician Final Product Verification is an example of this. I believe that provider status is just ahead and hope that pharmacists are ready to embrace that opportunity.

How has WPQC accreditation impacted your pharmacy practice?

We are proud to wear the badge of WPQC. I believe that on the surface, it is a program that holds our practice accountable to a minimum service set. In addition, the program provides opportunities to provide care to patients separate from their prescriptions. I believe that the current acceptable reimbursement model that pharmacies have with our state Medicaid program is a result of the work that WPQC has done.

You are an active member in the Wisconsin CPESN. What are your hopes for this program?

As a member of CPESN WI, I collaborate with other independents across the state. We have established a minimum service set in an effort to increase adherence and produce better outcomes. Our goal as a network is to engage the healthcare system with our services separate from that of the traditional prescription drug benefit. We are part of Flip the Pharmacy which is working to transform pharmacy workflows, to accommodate a more appointment-based model, and to assist in the completion of pharmacy eCare Plans.

Tell me about the TB test clinics you held for UW pharmacy students. What inspired you to hold the clinics?

On April 21st, we were informed that the pharmacy students in question had to have results read before April 30th. The only option we could think of to test 150 students in less than 10 days, was to have a clinic. This was also the best way we could think of to reduce the spread of COVID to our staff and customers, since they were scheduled after regular store hours.

What training or past experiences prepared you for the clinics?

None. Matt Huppert, staff pharmacist, and I brainstormed over the phone for 30 minutes to develop a plan. After we had a meeting to learn the proper technique, we again ran through the proposed plan for our clinic. The first day of the clinic, we had 3 pharmacists inject 99 patients in 2 hours; we did not do much to change our plan after that.

What barriers to TB testing did you encounter?

We had less than 72 hours to produce a Collaborative Practice Agreement, needed to complete training on the procedure, produce a Standard Operating Procedure for the clinics considering COVID 19 precautions, perform a cost analysis, negotiate a payment agreement with the UW School of Pharmacy, and obtain enough supplies, including the skin tests themselves.



Above: Thad Schumacher, PharmD, fills out the paperwork for a UW-Madison School of Pharmacy student to document the administration of his TB skin test.

techniques. Pharmacist, Daniel Ricci, also administered tests.

The clinics ran as smoothly as expected, and Fitchburg Family Pharmacy continues to offer TB skin tests by appointment for an administration fee of \$45. More clinics will be held for incoming students who need two-step tests, on back-to-back weekends, although a payment structure will be introduced. In the future, the pharmacy hopes to continue this service by scheduling clusters of patients over a couple of days in the middle of the month.

Kristen South is a 4th Year Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy in Madison, WI.

Interview with Thad Cont.

How did you overcome them?

I have an excellent team -- everyone pitched in to make this work. I often put my team under fire, with my "say yes" attitude, and they really pulled it off. We could not have made this work without our collaborating provider, Dr. Bukstein; our pharmacist, Ryan Bender; who drafted our standard operating procedure; and registered nurse, Dani Huppert, for training us on technique and reading.

What has been the intervention or service implementation that you have been proudest of in your pharmacy?

I have been really proud of my team with their implementation of COVID procedures and the TB clinics. Overall, I am proud to show that a small independent pharmacy can have success in a metro area, by serving the needs of its community. It is my belief that free delivery is at the cornerstone of that success.

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