



we were reading along with the children, even though we were unable to visit the shelter in-person. We also worked with our pre-pharmacy chapter to make Tik-Tok videos to send to the shelter. The videos were funny and entertaining, and they reminded the kids that we were still thinking about them. However, the production of the videos took longer than we anticipated. With Christmas break and our school remaining online after the holidays (due to the pandemic), planning and organizing videos with the members and other students was delayed. Fortunately, we were able to record some videos and we plan to make more for the Children's Shelter to lift their spirits and remind them that in these hard times, there are people who truly care about them.

Serving Locally: Opportunities for Pharmacists to Volunteer in their own Backyards

By Juliette Miller and Christine R. Birnie

INTRODUCTION

The number of pharmacists and student pharmacists participating on medical mission trips has been growing steadily. At St. John Fisher College, students in the Wegmans School of Pharmacy started participating in the school's first trip in 2007, which has increased to eight to ten trips annually, including up to six summer service trips and two to four Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) rotations each year. However, not all pharmacists and student pharmacists have the time, resources, desire, or ability to participate on an international or even a domestic service trip. For these individuals, there are opportunities not too far from home.

Social determinants of health, such as a person's income, location of residence, social life, and other socioeconomic factors are strongly linked to a person's health.¹ Studies have demonstrated that these factors can cause adverse effects on population health, which have a high cost burden on society.² Although there are increasing numbers of pharmacists and student pharmacists participating on medical mission trips all over the world, these population health issues are also right here in America. One way that pharmacists can help is by volunteering at healthcare centers for uninsured or

underinsured patients in their own communities.

ST. JOSEPH'S NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

One example of a healthcare center for the underinsured is St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center located in Rochester, New York. Rooted in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the center offers primary, dental, and mental health care, social services, financial and legal counseling, and assistance with access to healthcare for patients who do not have insurance. They serve approximately 3,000 individuals and 15,000 visits annually. Funded primarily by donations, the center has 20 full-time and part-time employees and over 250 volunteers who help keep the clinic running.³ The center also houses a medication room where pharmacists and pharmacy students routinely volunteer to help organize and provide support for the providers.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

While St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center only has one location in Rochester, New York, there are more than one thousand clinics with similar services across the country.⁴ In Upstate New York, other clinics include the University of Rochester UR Well Clinics and the Jericho Road Community Health Center in Buffalo, which function similarly to St.

Joseph's Neighborhood Center.^{5,6} In fact, a UR Well Clinic utilizes St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center facility on Tuesday evenings.⁵ To find a clinic that provides similar services, the National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics website offers a page to search for such centers in a particular area of the country.⁴ For those who are unable or do not wish to participate on an international medical mission trip, serving in these types of clinics provides a comparable experience without requiring overseas travel.

Pharmacists can help in these settings in countless ways. As medication experts, pharmacists can provide recommendations to healthcare providers and counsel patients on medications, lifestyle modifications, and the importance of attending to their disease states. Understanding social determinants of health allows pharmacists to identify which ones affect patients who come to the clinic so that they can encourage lifestyle changes that will help reduce medication burden. In addition, pharmacists have a good working knowledge of current prescription health insurance, particularly pertaining to coverage of medications, helping patients get insured, and assisting in the prior authorization process if needed. Often, it is necessary to consider

alternative options when working with an underinsured patient population, such as developing mnemonics, phrases, and movements to help patients remember information about their medications. All of the services mentioned above can help improve the patient's quality of life and lessen the financial burden for the patient and the healthcare system.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

As a fourth-year pharmacy student at St. John Fisher College, I had the opportunity to serve at St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center as part of a service elective APPE rotation. Although I was originally scheduled to serve on a medical missions APPE rotation in Roatan, Honduras, the trip was cancelled due to concerns surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. On the proposed APPE, I was scheduled to serve in the Clinica Esperanza, a freestanding healthcare clinic for underinsured patients.⁷ In place of that rotation, I had the opportunity to serve at St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center.

During my experience at St. Joseph's, I organized the medication room, counseled patients on their medications, helped the providers at the clinic find alternative agents for patients who were unable to pay for their medications, called patients about their medications, and calculated insulin doses. It was a privilege to combine my passions of pharmacy and service while working independently and assisting other healthcare professionals.

The experience, in many ways, was similar to the work I would have done in Honduras. In addition to providing medical services, I also helped serve the Center in other ways, such as cleaning and distributing food donations. For instance, I spent one morning cutting one hundred loaves of bread to be distributed to clients of the center. This practical service reminded me of many Bible verses, such the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish; and John 6:35 (NIV) "*Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'*"

I am so grateful for the opportunity that God provided after my original APPE rotation was cancelled. Second Corinthians 9:8 (NIV) has special meaning to me in this context: "*And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things and at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*" My APPE rotation provided me with the opportunity to serve in such a unique setting, and to work independently with patients and other healthcare providers. I was inspired by the people I met, and I felt that my work was very similar to that on international trips, all while only having to travel less than five minutes from my door.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Pharmacists and student pharmacists have many opportunities to use their gifts and abilities locally and globally. Centers designed for caring for the

uninsured and underinsured in local communities provide ideal opportunities for service. As integral members of the healthcare team, pharmacists can provide a wide array of support to such centers and the patients they serve. This can be a great benefit for patients in these communities and can be outstanding opportunities for pharmacists and students to serve the underserved, often in their own backyards.

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A Physician Without Limits By Jean Vattakattu Varghese

The year 2020 began with much happiness and many expectations. But we never could have imagined that 2020 would bring a global pandemic that would drastically change all of our lives. Within just a few months, COVID-19 has affected more than 200 countries and territories around the world, causing over 500,000 deaths worldwide (as of this writing). Scientists are trying their best to find a treatment that would bring an end to this pandemic. Sadly, the secular world usually disregards the Great Physician who is without limits.

Let me use the examples of two kings from the Bible: King Asa and King Hezekiah. In 2 Chronicles 16:12 (NKJV) it states, "And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was very severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians. So Asa rested with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign." The next example is from 2 Kings 20:1-3, 5, 7 (NKJV): "In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death...he turned his face towards the wall, and prayed to the Lord saying, "Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before you in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly...Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you... and he recovered." From these examples, it is evident that one king relied on man's capabilities and wasn't healed, while the other king turned to God and trusted Him, which led to healing (albeit temporary) from his sickness.

There are numerous examples in the New Testament of how Jesus healed those who suffered from physical ailments such as the blind, the lame, and the lepers. In Luke 8:43, we see a woman who had a serious gynecological blood disorder for twelve years. She had spent all her livelihood on physicians, yet none of them could help her. But she had faith in the power and mercy of Jesus, and because of her strong faith Jesus had

compassion on her and healed her sickness.

Obviously, we need doctors and other healthcare professionals to provide treatments and medications while we live on this earth, but mankind has limitations on what can be done. God is the Master Creator of the entire universe and nothing is impossible for Him. As it says in Matthew 8:27 (NKJV), "Even the winds and the sea obey Him". But as we saw in the above examples, we should always turn to God first and pray for our needs, trusting that He will heal us in accordance with His will. James 5:15 (NKJV) says, "The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise Him up..." While we pray, we also need to trust that God IS able to heal us IF He so chooses, according to His perfect plan and timing. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Luke 11:2, NKJV).

The medical community is scrambling to find a cure for COVID-19. Yet God has given us the solution for pestilence in 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV). God says, "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." Yes! God is merciful and gracious and He is waiting for us to turn unto Him. So as Christians, we need to commit to praying for a spiritual revival in this country and in the world. We need to pray for humility, confession, and repentance for those who have turned away from God... but we also need to search our own hearts to see if there are any sins that we need to confess and repent of. When God sees genuine repentance, He promises two things that are desperately needed in this broken world: forgiveness and healing.

As mentioned, it is important that we also pray for God's will to be done and not our own desires. God has a specific purpose behind every situation that He leads us through. In those situations, God will provide His grace which is