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Chairman's Message

I know that each and every one of us has had experiences come true that our parents warned us about when we were young. I always thought they were just being over-protective or naïve and just did not understand the level of technology that we live in today. Once again, my mother, Edythe, was right and Scott gets to be humbled.

One thing that mama always told me was make sure I prepared for the worse and under no circumstance was I to get rid of our farm. Her reasoning was because she had come through the Great Depression and knew how quickly things could change. She said that when the economy crashed no one was given warning and those who had prepared for worse (and had some farmland) struggled, but not as much as those who did not. I remember laughing at her and saying that we live in a different Era and that could never happen again.

Enter Covid-19!!!! If you are like me, you are in total amazement that something as simple as a virus could completely change (and shut down) our entire world. Our lives, and how we practice our profession, has been completely changed for years to come. The good thing out of this is that Independent Pharmacy has always had to "prepare for the worse" and adapt to change. I was proud to see pharmacist and technicians across the globe step up and accept the challenges they faced, without even a second of hesitation.

I want to say THANK YOU to all my fellow Independent Pharmacists, their technicians, the cashiers, delivery personnel, pharmacy students, and anyone else who has helped take care of our patients during this crisis. I have never been prouder to be part of the profession of pharmacy. I truly believe this Covid-19 Crisis is going to help us to get the provider status, and recognition, that we so greatly deserve. We were faced with our Great Depression and we stepped up perfectly.

Edythe passed away several years back. If she were here, I could proudly tell her that we were prepared for the worse, we held on to our "Pharms", and we helped the world recover. To my pharmacy friends, THANK YOU!!!!

WE MADE EDYTHE PROUD



Amanda Gaddy, R.Ph.,
AIP Director of Clinical
Services

AIP Clinical Corner

Positive Outcomes Resulting From Covid-19

When I think back to 'life' and what was ordinary three months ago, I can't help but feel emotional. Who would have thought it would be a big deal to shop and not worry about the supply of food or toilet paper? It's hard to believe that the world stopped, mostly, so abruptly. What didn't stop and went into full speed overdrive was the Independent Pharmacy

Community!

I want to thank each one of you for stepping up and going above and beyond to take care of your communities. While we are still figuring out the 'new normal,' there have been many positive changes resulting from the pandemic. One positive outcome is implementing or optimizing a clinical medication synchronization program.

Pharmacy owners who already had robust med sync programs have noted the disruption due to the Covid-19 was minimal. Since most patients on maintenance meds were already scheduled, the most significant difference was how the patients received the medications, i.e., delivery, curbside, drive-through, etc.

Many owners implemented med sync as a RESULT of the pandemic and are already seeing the benefits.

- Better control of inventory- order what you need when you need it (financial impact)
- More control of workflow- you schedule when you fill prescriptions
- Improved adherence and outcomes (decrease DIR fees)
- Track interventions (eCare plan)
 - Show the impact of interventions
 - Streamline patient records
 - Communicate electronically with providers through direct messaging

Implementing med sync programs and utilizing eCare plans allow you to manage your pharmacy more efficiently while improving patient outcomes.

CPESN of Georgia has resources for pharmacy owners and staff to assist with this pharmacy practice transformation. Dr. Erin Dalton dives deeper into how implementing med sync and utilizing eCare plans help during situations like Covid-19. Click on the link <https://youtu.be/cYi0-zfjGw> or search "Covid-19 Best Practices-CPESN Ga" on youtube to access the recording.

Most importantly, take action if you haven't already! Please reach out to AIP if we can assist in any way.

**Members
Please Be
Aware**

**When emailing
AIP regarding
pharmacy
issues please
include your
name,
pharmacy
name, address,
phone number
and NPI#.**

Study: Heating N95 Masks Could Disinfect for Reuse

Pharmacy Times - 2020-05-12 20:29:00 - Aislinn Antrim, Assistant Editor

Heating N95 respiratory masks to 185 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 minutes may be the safest and most reliable way to reuse the masks, researchers found in a recently released study.¹ The ability to sanitize and reuse personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gowns, and face shields has become particularly important as the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in ongoing PPE shortages.

PPE and appropriate infection control training are vital to keep health care workers safe, according to the researchers from Oregon Health and Science University.²

An evidence review of 64 studies related to rates of infection among health care workers exposed to COVID-19, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), or Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), indicated that providing PPE is not enough. Training workers on how to properly use the equipment is vital to ensuring their safety.²

The investigators also found that front-line exposures, such as involvement in intubations, direct contact with infected patients, or contact with bodily secretions, resulted in increased risk of infection. There is also a significant impact on mental health among workers exposed to the virus without proper PPE, including high rates of depression, anxiety, and psychological stress.²

"Infection control training is important," said senior author Roger Chou, MD, in a statement. "It's not just about providing the equipment but helping health care workers understand how they need to use it. Training and education were consistently associated with decreased risk of infection."²

Continued on Page 7

LITTLE FIVE POINTS PHARMACIST MAKING COMMUNITY A SAFER PLACE

IRA KATZ NAMED FIRST CHAMPION FOR OPIOID SAFETY



A Little Five Points pharmacist was recently recognized as a Champion for Opioid Safety by the Georgia Pharmacy Foundation. Ira Katz, RPh, owner of Little Five Points Pharmacy, received the designation after completing a series of educational programming aimed at reducing opioid-related overdoses. He was the first pharmacist in Georgia to complete the program.

"It all started with my connection with a local needle exchange operation and the need to provide opioid education and naloxone (Narcan) to whoever needed it," Katz said.

Naloxone is a drug that reverses opioid overdoses.

"Anyone who wants Narcan can walk up to our pharmacy and get it. We give it away for free," Katz said. "I can't tell you how many people have come back over the years and said, 'Thank you for the Narcan, I was able to save someone's life. There have been several instances where we have administered Narcan and CPR to people who had overdosed near the pharmacy.'"

Opioid overdoses killed more than 47,000 people in 2017, according to the most recent National Survey on Drug Use and Health. The [National Safety Council](#) recently released a rearranged cause of death report, saying more people are likely to die in the United States from an opioid overdose than gun violence or car accidents.

"The bottom line is that many people within greater Atlanta know that they can count on Little 5 Points Pharmacy for education about opioid safety as well as how to administer Narcan which we provide at no charge," Katz said.

Katz estimates he has dispensed more than 1,000 units of Narcan to local businesses and restaurants, and the local community to help with the crisis.

The Georgia Pharmacy Foundation just launched its "Champions" program to help pharmacists and their teams implement opioid safety best practices to fight opioid misuse in their own communities.

Mike Crooks, Pharm.D., who chairs the Opioid Safety Workgroup for the foundation, said new processes pharmacists may learn include counseling patients who receive opioids on how to administer naloxone.

Ira Katz opened Little Five Points Pharmacy 39 years ago. He received a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Emory University and a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from St. John's College of Pharmacy. He was a recipient of the 2019 Bowl of Hygeia award, commemorating his service to the profession and the community. The award recipient is selected annually through state pharmacy associations and recognized for making unique contributions to a strong, healthy community through service and personal leadership. The award remains one of the most notable achievements for pharmacists.

ATTENTION: Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Providers

To ensure that our Medicaid members have an uninterrupted distribution of medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic and to limit the burden on the provider network, the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) has implemented the provisions below.

- Any "approved" Prior Authorizations (PA) for supplies that are provided on a monthly basis that were set to expire on March 16, 2020 or prior to June 1, 2020 have been extended by an additional 90-days (this excludes one-time purchase orders).
- DCH is temporarily waiving the CMN requirement on NEW oxygen supplies and related equipment requests and will only require a written/signed order by a physician. The order must include the following: a diagnosis of the disease requiring home use of oxygen, the oxygen flow rate, and an estimate of frequency, duration of use, and duration of need. (This excludes new/re-cert orders for members who were previously established on oxygen supplies.)
- The face-to-face requirement for DME supplies may be met with a telehealth visit record for certain types of equipment as identified by DCH.
- The signature requirement for the delivery of DME supplies has been waived until further notice.

At this time, the 30-day supply allowance for DME supplies will remain as per policy.

The Department will continue to actively monitor for any supply disruption challenges that may arise during this time. For any questions or concerns, please contact us by email at dme.ops@dch.ga.gov.

Thank you for your continued service and participation in the Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids® programs.



Pharmacists are key to break free from COVID-19 paralysis

By B. Douglas Hoey, RPh, MBA, National Community Pharmacists Association CEO

It's fair to say that these are extraordinary times. Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, however, community pharmacy has shown it is up to the test.

We've seen and shared many stories about the creativity, ingenuity, and dedication of NCPA members in this time of national crisis. These stories have shown without a doubt that serving patients and communities is the passion that drives independent pharmacy.

Pharmacy now has a fantastic opportunity to play an even bigger role in America's fight against COVID-19, the ability to administer and order COVID-19 tests. Importantly, that's tests — plural. The type of test that has been in the news during most of the COVID-19 crisis is for determining whether a patient is positive for the virus. Perhaps even more interesting, though, is the test that detects the presence of antibodies that may convey immunity.

In an economic survey conducted recently by NCPA, more than half of members said they want to conduct testing. That's a move in the right direction. The one-sided contracts from PBMs that pharmacies are being offered aren't getting more generous. While the National Community Pharmacists Association doesn't do contracting, we are fighting for reasonable reimbursement. Expanding services and working in collaboration with local physicians is a key strategy that progressive pharmacies are pursuing to increase their value in the pharmacy network.

During the H1N1 crisis of 2009, pharmacies showed the value they bring to the health care team when they worked with health departments to provide immunizations. COVID-19 could provide a similar opportunity, but on a much larger scale. With testing now and immunizations once a vaccine becomes available, community pharmacists could be the centerpiece for helping the country get back to normalcy!

NCPA was a vocal voice working with other national pharmacy associations advocating for pharmacists to have this authority. HHS listened. From Assistant Secretary for Health Brett P. Giroir, MD: "The accessibility and distribution of retail and *independent community-based* (emphasis added) pharmacies make pharmacists the first point of contact with a health care professional for many Americans."

Before you can run with testing, there's a necessary first step. You must apply for a CLIA waiver. The NCPA Innovation Center has created a helpful video that walks you through the waiver form. As far as government forms go, it's an easy lift. If your pharmacy doesn't have a CLIA waiver, take the proactive step and apply today.

Get ready. Watch (or re-watch) our April 8 webinar, *Opportunities for Pharmacy Testing During COVID-19*. On our Coronavirus Pharmacy Practice page (ncpa.org/coronavirus), we have a lot of resources to help you get started, including the video on applying for a CLIA waiver, the waiver form, the pharmacy testing webinar, a helpful FAQ, a list of FDA Emergency Use Authorized tests, and more.

NCPA recently reported that a nationwide analysis of pharmacies shows that for millions of Americans, their local independent pharmacy is not only their best option, it's their only option. According to data analyzed by NCPA, there are 14,866 ZIP codes in the United States with at least one pharmacy. In 3,057 of those, or roughly 21 percent, the only pharmacies are independently owned pharmacies, underscoring the fact community pharmacies are a patient safety net for their communities both in normal times and during a national emergency.

At Surgoinsville Pharmacy in rural east Tennessee, owner and pharmacist Beth Bryan started offering COVID testing. The pharmacy had its CLIA waiver in place, as they've been offering testing for flu, strep, A1C, UTI, anemia, and more. Surgoinsville Pharmacy is a CPESN® network pharmacy and, as such, was well-positioned to start nasal swab testing as soon as the FDA allowed it.

We're all anxious to get back to normal. Pharmacy now has the authority to help us get there.



Save The Date:

- ◆ **GPhA Convention Postponed**
Tentative Date:
Thursday August 13
-Sunday August 16,
2020 Omni Amelia
Island, FL
- ◆ **AIP Fall Meeting**
Sunday,
October 25, 2020
Middle Georgia
State University -
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Center, Macon, GA

If you change wholesalers please be sure to let us know. Please contact Verouschka Betancourt-Whigham "V" at vbwhigham@gpha.org or 404-419-8102. Thank You

Reprinted from the AJC. Friday, May 15, 2020

Widen pharmacists' power amid crisis

By Earl L. "Buddy" Carter and Lucinda L. Maine

As Georgia joins a number of states in lifting its shelter at home order and allows many businesses to reopen, it is important to remember that we are still in the middle of the COVID-19 crisis. As of May 13, Georgia has reported over 35,000 cases and over 1,500 deaths, while the U.S. has nearly 1.4 million confirmed cases and over 84,000 deaths.

National health care experts are predicting COVID-19 may cost 100,000 to 250,000 Americans their lives before this crisis is over, and our nation's heroic health care workers are putting their own health and safety in jeopardy to provide patients with the best care possible.

Among those on the front lines of this global pandemic working to keep us safe are America's pharmacists and other pharmacy personnel. These highly accessible health care providers are working in a variety of settings, including the intensive care units treating the sickest patients infected with the virus, as well as in communities where they are making free hand sanitizer and ensuring their patients are still getting the prescriptions and supplies they need to stay healthy.

But these stories only show part of what America's pharmacists are capable of doing. Through their daily interactions with community members across the country, coupled with their role as the medication experts on health care teams, pharmacists can uniquely speak to the policies and practices needed to help keep populations healthy and safe.



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keep populations healthy and safe.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has stretched our health care system to its limit, with our heroic health care workers in several states already dealing with more patients than they can reasonably be expected to handle. While America's pharmacists are currently providing essential services to patients across the country, we need federal, state and local regulatory bodies to put in place protocols to free up our nation's pharmacists to do what they do best: take care of patients.

We applaud the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) new guidance authorizing licensed pharmacists to order and administer COVID-19 tests. However, more needs to be done. Therefore, we ask President Donald Trump's COVID-19 Task Force to consider the following four recommendations that would go a long way in our fight against

this deadly disease.

First, pharmacists need to be authorized to test, treat, immunize and, when appropriate, initiate treatment for infectious diseases, like COVID-19. Ninety percent of the U.S. population lives within 5 miles of a pharmacist, and these medication experts are often a patient's most convenient option to speak with a health care professional with the training to conduct testing and provide basic treatment. Pharmacists should have expanded immunization authority to include all U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved vaccines, including the forthcoming novel vaccine for COVID-19, for all indicated populations.

Second, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians with valid licenses should be allowed to operate across state lines, including via telehealth. This is an unprecedented crisis, impacting some regions more than others. Pharmacists are ready to help their neighbors

across state lines.

Third, pharmacists should be able to address shortages and continuity of care issues. The rapid spread of this virus and other strain on our health care system is leading to critical drug shortages. Pharmacists should be authorized to substitute and interchange therapies, as appropriate and needed, without waiting for physician authorization when product shortages arise. We also recommend that FDA should identify drugs that are in, or at risk, of shortage and work with manufacturers to extend expiration date, as well as allow public reporting of the causes of shortages.

Finally, we need to remove barriers and expand health care coverage for pharmacy services. One obvious fix would be to remove restrictions on home and mail delivery, especially now when we are telling our most vulnerable citizens to stay home as much as possible. We should also remove limited medication supply requirements for essential, life-sustaining medications to ensure patients will have an ample supply of these medications during these difficult times.

One obvious fix would be to remove restrictions on home and mail delivery, especially now when we are telling our most vulnerable citizens to stay home as much as possible. We should also remove limited medication supply requirements for essential, life-sustaining medications to ensure patients will have an ample supply of these medications during these difficult times.

Symptoms of Coronavirus

Watch for symptoms

According to the CDC, people with COVID-19 can have a wide range of symptoms — ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all inclusive. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention

Look for emergency warning signs* for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.



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Indy Health Incorporated Partners with Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company for Independent Pharmacy Owned Medicare D Plan

Columbus, OH – February XX, 2020 Indy Health Inc. has partnered with Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company to provide support for independent pharmacies and their patients. Indy Health Inc. has formed Indy Health Insurance Company, which will provide a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan designed to be friendly to independent pharmacies and patients. Indy Health Insurance Company is a transparent Medicare D plan that offers better reimbursements to independent pharmacies along with no DIR fees. The plan will also provide enhanced patient care and compliance while lowering drug plan costs to consumers.

Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company has provided capital and will provide strategic insight to help support Indy Health Insurance Company's Independent Pharmacy owned Medicare D plan. These funds will help support operations for Indy Health Insurance Company as it begins enrolling patients in October Of 2020. Additionally, Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company will select a representative to serve as a Board Member for Indy Health Insurance Company to help create the strategy to expand the Medicare D plan nationwide.

"We are very excited to be supporting Indy Health Inc. and independent pharmacies," explained Edward Yorty, President and CEO of Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company. "We look forward to seeing Indy Health succeed and to provide continued support to independent pharmacy through this partnership."

Ed Yorty and Laura Atkinson, Chair of the Board for Indy Health Insurance Company have been working together along with the Board members for both groups to put this partnership together.

"The partnership of Indy Health and Pharmacist Mutual is a synergistic alliance that allows Indy Health to have a partner who can help expand the plan nationwide as well as a strategic partner whose membership that is comprised of independent pharmacies to help create future pathways for growth" said Laura Atkinson, Chair of the Board for Indy Health Insurance Company"

Indy Health Insurance Company licensed in Arkansas has submitted expansion applications in Georgia, Illinois, Pennsylvania and West Virginia for the 2021 plan year. They have also submitted their CMS application for their Medicare D plan and awaiting approval.

About Indy Health, Inc.

Indy Health Inc. is a subsidiary of Indy Health Holdings, LLC (IHH). Units of IHH are owned by Indy Health Solutions, LLC (IHS) and other investors who support independent pharmacy. IHS is owned by nine independent pharmacy owners and the Georgia Academy of Independent Pharmacies. Each founder has extensive experience and knowledge of prescription drugs, prescription drug plans and the pharmaceutical industry. While independent pharmacies who contract with Indy Health Insurance Company will receive better reimbursement rates than generally available, investors in IHH will receive the best reimbursements.

To learn more, visit www.indyhealthinc.com

About Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company

Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company is a nationally recognized leader in insurance and risk management serving independent pharmacy owners since 1909. The company offers professional liability, commercial, and personal insurance products. The company is rated "A" Excellent* by AM Best for property and casualty insurance. Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company employs over 300 professionals through its operations in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Learn more about Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company and its full product line at phmic.com.

*AM Best Financial strength rating is an independent opinion

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Here is something **free** for you. Money making tips emailed to you every two weeks. This is where you start to become a merchandiser extraordinaire. Here is the link to sign up: <http://www.ncpa.org/pmsubscribe>



For your safety and ours

Before you re-open your store and schedule more regular hours, plan to announce the steps you will be taking to keep your staff and customers safe. Policies may include continued social distancing, the need to wear a mask, ongoing curbside delivery, and the number of customers allowed in the store at one time. Post the safety policy on all social media and, if your budget allows, purchase a small ad in your local newspaper. As for the newspaper ad, all you need is a photo of your store, the headline "For your safety and ours" and a bullet point list of policies.



The world keeps spinning

To celebrate national Lyme disease awareness month, I unknowingly invited a tick to borough headfirst into my chest. Evidently, ticks are not into social distancing. Along with giving me antibiotics, a can of ginger ale, and a tick remover (for next time), the doctor asked me to purchase gauze and ichthammol ointment. This is a reminder, bugs will keep biting, the sun will keep burning, flowers and weeds will still make people sneeze, and accidents will still happen. That sounds like a good message for your digital sign. Place an OTC order today, before you forget.



Nudged to think about something other than Covid-19

While picking up my ichthammol ointment, to cash out, I was directed to keep my mask on and told to use a designated aisle. To my amazement, I noticed that the vitamins section had been repositioned to make room for an "Impulse Sale Center." The 12ft section had everything from boxed chocolates (it was a few days before Mother's Day) to water balloon slingshots, crayons, shark teeth, and a giant bubble wand. This is a great reminder that impulse buying doesn't ever stop; at times, it just needs a nudge.



Father Time

Apparently, nothing said "Happy Mother's Day" better than a mask and a bottle of hand sanitizer. Other shared sales data pointed to an increase in inspirational gifts. Those who showed an increase in sales had increased the store hours and the amount of OTC sections made available to consumers. With that in mind, to optimize your sales for Father's Day, from Friday, June 12th to Sunday, June 21st consider extending the hours that you will be allowing customers to come into your store (as allowed by your state, of course).



Let it Shine

This little store of mine, I'm going to let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. Make a 20-second video of your store entrance being sanitized. Place the video on your Facebook business site and store website. Let customers know you are doing everything to keep them safe.

Continued from Page 2 - Study: Heating N95 Masks Could Disinfect for Reuse

Providing that equipment has been a challenge, however, with one survey finding that 42% of respondents characterized the disruption in supplies of surgical-type medical masks as either "major" or "moderate."³ In an effort to better understand techniques for disinfecting N95 masks, a team of researchers tested several strategies.

According to the authors, N95 masks contain a layer of polypropylene fibers that are electrostatically charged in order to form a porous, breathable fabric while still catching smaller particles. The CDC has recommended several possible techniques for disinfecting the masks, including heating, ultraviolet (UV) radiation, and bleach treatments, but the study authors noted that none of these options have been extensively tested, especially for multiple rounds of disinfectant.¹

The authors examined pieces of the fabric used to make N95 masks and compared various disinfecting methods. First, spraying the fabric with an ethanol or chlorine bleach solution drastically reduced the filtration efficiency, from about 96% to 56% after only 1 treatment with ethanol. With the chlorine bleach treatment, the efficiency dropped from 96% to 56%.¹

They found that a single steam treatment did maintain the filtration, but 5 treatments declined the mask's efficiency. UV radiation, on the other hand, allowed up to 20 cycles of disinfection, but administering the precise dose of UV to kill the virus without damaging the materials could be challenging.¹

Finally, they found that heating the masks at 185°F for 20 minutes allowed the fabric to be treated 50 times without the loss of efficiency.¹

While this was a relatively small study, ongoing research combined with strengthened supply chains could help to alleviate some fears of health care workers caring for patients without proper PPE.¹

"Most people understand it's a high priority to protect our nurses and doctors," Chou said. "In addition to the impact that COVID-19 would have on infected health care workers, they can pose a transmission risk. Plus, they can't work if they become infected, and maintaining health care capacity throughout the pandemic is important."¹

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KEEP INDEPENDENTS INDEPENDENT

Please don't forget, if you have a desire to sell your pharmacy or if you have an interest in buying a pharmacy, please contact Jeff Lurey at 404-419-8103. We have been quite successful during the past several years at keeping independents independent. We maintain a list of pharmacists who want to buy additional pharmacies and we also keep a list of young pharmacists who want to own a pharmacy. All information is kept strictly confidential.

AIP MISSION STATEMENT

To advance the concept of pharmacy care. To ensure the economic viability and security of Independent Pharmacy; To provide a forum for Independent Pharmacy to exchange information and develop strategies, goals and objectives; To address the unique business and professional issues of independent pharmacies; To develop and implement marketing opportunities for members of the Academy with emphasis on the third party prescription drug program/benefit market; To provide educational programs designed to enhance the managerial skills of Independent Pharmacy Owners and Managers; and, To establish and implement programs and services designed to assist Independent Pharmacy Owners and Managers.



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