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Chairman's Message

First, I hope everyone has had a safe and wonderful holiday. It certainly has been an extremely difficult year for all of us. We approach 2022 with the same questions and challenges we faced in 2021. How do we continue to make sure ALL of our patients receive their vaccines and boosters? The science is clear, getting "BOOSTED" is the best way to protect oneself and others from the new, very contagious, Omicron variant. The message to protect everyone remains the same.

1. Washing hands
2. Social distancing
3. Masks
4. Vaccination

The virus is not going away anytime soon, so please use all your social media sources to espouse for the above.

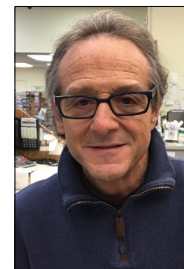
On another subject, I sit here writing this newsletter article with AIP memories swirling around in my head. As you all know, Jeff Lurey is retiring as the VP-AIP Director. It's a bittersweet moment. I can't help but think of the many years we had together establishing this incredible Academy of Independent Pharmacy. I thought it fitting that as Jeff retires and Jonathan Marquess takes over as our new AIP director, we recollect how this wonderful organization was created.

AIP was the genius of Larry Braden, the current EVP of the Georgia Pharmacy Association, and close friend and colleague, Oren Skolnick, who recognized the need to bring all Georgia independent pharmacy owners together to protect, defend and maintain the viability of independent pharmacy in Georgia. Their vision was a unique one, as the bite from the PBM industry hadn't quite hit yet. Both Larry and Oren saw the writing on the wall and knew that something needed to be done. Hence, the formation of the GPhA Academy of Independent Pharmacy in 1993.

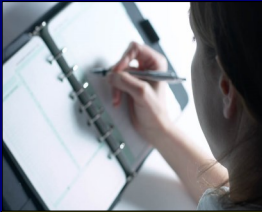
Their first order of business was to find someone to help recruit and develop the organization. Fortunately, they found a retired pharmacist from New Mexico who had relocated to the Atlanta area to be closer to his family. Of course, I am talking about Joe Mengoni. Joe had retired from Ciba-Geigy as their national sales manager and was itching to get involved, in whatever capacity, with pharmacy. The marriage was set. Larry, Oren and Joe put together the foundation for what is now AIP.

I remember going to a CE program at a Buckhead hotel on a Sunday morning and running into a gentleman that was my height (y'all can laugh now). After our introductions, I mentioned that I was an independent pharmacy owner in Little 5 Points. Joe said he was putting together a group of independent pharmacy owners and would I be interested in joining. Ever the skeptic, I said I will think about it. At 9:00 am Monday morning, Joe shows up at my pharmacy to further discuss this new venture. Ultimately, I couldn't say no to this thoughtful and focused man with a mission.

Larry, Oren & Joe were putting together a Board of Directors (BOD), and Joe asked if I was interested. Again, you just can't say no to Joe. I was already a member of GPhA but not very active or involved. I saw this as an opportunity to bring whatever ideas and skills I could contribute to help my Georgia colleagues.



Ira



Save The Date:

- ◆ **AIP Spring Meeting**
Sunday March 13,
2022 GPhA Office,
Sandy Springs, GA
- ◆ **GPhA Convention**
Thursday June 9 -
Sunday June 12,
2022 Omni Amelia
Island, FL

Members Please Be Aware

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

Carter, Gonzalez Reintroduce Bipartisan Drug Price Transparency in Medicaid Act

Reps. Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (R-GA) and Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX) introduced bipartisan legislation that would limit the power of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) to artificially spike Medicaid drug prices.

The [Drug Price Transparency in Medicaid Act](#) bans the use of spread pricing by middlemen (PBMs) in Medicaid managed care. PBMs drive up prescription drug costs without adding any value to the consumer.

"Prescription drug prices are way too high. As a Pharmacist, I've seen the pain in patient's eyes as they make the impossible choice between paying for food and paying for medication. With this bill, we can radically decrease drug prices and put power back into the hands of the patients, without expensive or heavy-handed government programs. I want to thank Congressman Gonzalez for his support and commitment to protecting the lives, health, and pocketbooks of patients across America," said Carter.

"Americans deserve transparency and accountability in their drug pricing, and the Transparency in Medicaid Act will do just that," said Gonzalez. **"This legislation will offer solutions to policies that have been negatively affecting healthcare and prescription drug costs for far too long. I'm proud to introduce this bipartisan bill with Congressman Carter to protect South Texas patients and community pharmacies."**

Spread pricing occurs when a PBM charges health plans for prescription drugs more than they pay the pharmacy. Instead of passing the full payment on to pharmacies, PBMs keep the "spread" as profit.

The bill was originally introduced in the 116th Congress with bipartisan support.

<https://buddycarter.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=8597>

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<https://www.gpha.org/awards>

AIP was off and running! But running where? We couldn't communicate with all the Georgia pharmacies via zoom or social media as they did not exist. How do we get the word out to everyone? Larry owned several pharmacies, Oren owned a few himself, and Joe was orchestrating the AIP plan with the BOD. AIP needed to hire someone to travel the state and recruit members. Guess who was in the right place at the right time?! Another short guy (you can laugh again!) had recently sold his pharmacies and was itching to get back into any aspect of our industry. This gentleman was a past president of GPhA, a native Georgian, a UGA graduate, and he had great connections with other pharmacy owners. Welcome our very own Jeff Lurey. Another perfect fit! We hired Jeff as our first Member Service Representative (MSR).

Jeff traveled the state stopping by independent pharmacies to encourage them to join AIP. Joe also hit the road at times, but his primary focus was working with and developing the new AIP BOD. The Board decided that a major benefit to its members would focus on helping reduce individual pharmacy costs by bringing in partners. The Alternative Income Committee (AIC) was formed with John Glenn as the first chair and Marv Lieber, Jay Mosley and me as members. In discussing strategy for going forward, I suggested that the first partner we needed had to impact every independent pharmacy, regardless of size. What should that be? VIALS!!

We set off calling and setting up meetings with several vial manufacturers. While we were doing this, Jeff and Joe kept signing up new AIP members. Although we never considered AIP to be a buying group, we needed to exercise our clout as this new venture grew. I'll never forget Len, the national sales manager of Owens-Brockway, who came to make his presentation to us without offering any discounts. He sat there and laughed saying this so-called new organization could never pull it off. Boy was he wrong! We met with the owners, Dave and Joe, of a new start up vial company from Tennessee, Tri-State. They came back with a pricing structure that was both beneficial to the members and brought in revenue to AIP.

This initial program almost immediately dropped member prices for vials by 30-35% -- a fixed expense that only AIP members enjoyed. With this first partner success, it gave Jeff a major boost to help build AIP.

As AIP grew, we recognized that AIP needed another field representative. Joe interviewed several folks for the position, and when Sid Anderson came in for his interview, he clearly was the right one for the job. Sid had spent several decades with different wholesalers and knew the industry inside and out. Another perfect fit for AIP! Jeff and Sid split up the state and our membership continued to grow.

AIC continued to address new partnerships, especially with the wholesalers that would turn out to be a win-win-win for all involved. When John Glenn left his position as AIC chair, I became the next chair. We needed a new member for our committee, and we were VERY fortunate to have Laird Miller join the team. The pieces of the puzzle kept coming together. The only thing that I had trouble with was Joe, Jeff and I could talk eye-to-eye, but I needed a step ladder to talk eye-to-eye with Laird.

Laird went on to be a great asset to AIC and would eventually become AIP chairman for more than a decade. Jeff and Laird hit it off and, at times, they would travel the state together to recruit new members. The new dynamic duo was awesome. Before long we had around 500 members.

When Joe retired in 2005, Jeff became the second AIP director with Sid helping to hire additional MSRs to cover the state. Under Jeff's leadership, AIP is in a strong and healthy position to continue engaging in its work to support all independent pharmacies across Georgia.

Standing on the shoulders of Joe and Jeff, our newest AIP director Jonathan will continue to grow AIP and ensure its sustainability along with an outstanding staff of dedicated individuals. I wish Jonathan much success as our new director, and I know you all join me in offering him our full support as he begins his work that benefits each of our members.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your chairman,

Ira



THE FOLLOWING MEN ARE WANTED FOR CAUSING UNDUO DISTRESS TO CERTAIN VENDORS. THEY ARE SOMETIMES CALL THE DOWNSTAIRS FIVE, (NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH A JAZZ BAND IN NEW ORLEANS) OTHER ALIASES ARE THE MACON HALFWAYS . IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE MEN, APPROACH WITH EXTREME CAUTION! IT HAS BEEN SAID THEY WILL TAKE THE BLOOD OUT OF YOU AND SQUEEZE THE <=> AND STILL SMILE. THEIR LEADER ONE JOSE MENGONE IS A CARD SHARK AND HAS BEEN SEEN AT SOME CASINOS EVEN POSING AS A BLACK JACK DEALER.



For NCPA advocacy agenda, a win is a win, however it comes

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

Some of us learned how the process of making a law works in a civics class in elementary school. For others, it may have been by watching "Schoolhouse Rock" and hearing a rolled-up piece of paper sing, "*But I know I'll be a law someday / At least I hope and pray that I will / But today I am still just a bill.*"

Today, the rolled-up paper might sing, "*I'd like to be a bill someday / But chances look quite remote / 'Cause I'll never come up for a vote.*"

Our NCPA team works every day with members of the House and Senate and their staffs to advocate for issues that affect independent pharmacy owners and our patients. We explain that pharmacists can promise better outcomes and save taxpayer money.

Win-win, right? You'd think so but finding sponsors for our legislation isn't the problem. In fact, we have many champions on both sides of the aisle, including some of the most influential committee chairs. Our biggest obstacle, which is sadly familiar to most Americans, is getting bills for which there is bipartisan support out of committee and up for a vote. It seems that neither side wants to let the other have credit for passing a good idea. So, Congress has become the place where good ideas go to die.

We're not just sitting around waiting for things to change. When the road you're on is closed for repairs, you don't sit and wait until the repairs are done. You find another route. After all, according to the *NCPA Digest* sponsored by Cardinal Health, Medicare Part D and Medicaid alone cover 55 percent of prescriptions for independents. Like it or not, Uncle Sam is our biggest business partner. Capitol Hill efforts are vitally important, but we're finding that there's serious traction in states and through the courts. NCPA is also optimistic about some of the recent changes from the Federal Trade Commission indicating an interest in the outdated philosophy that "bigger is always better" if it saves the consumer a buck — no matter how detrimental "bigger" might have on the consumer experience.

In December 2020, we celebrated a big win in the courts, with the Supreme Court's unanimous decision in our favor in *Rutledge v. PCMA*. The Supreme Court ruling was historic but unsurprisingly, the PBMs continue to file lawsuits in state courts to try to narrow the impact of SCOTUS' ruling. NCPA is working with those states to actively fight back.

States' authority has expanded thanks to recent legal wins that will reverberate change throughout the industry for years to come. Whether it's through the states, Congress, the agencies, or the court really doesn't matter. We're looking for wins, and we'll take them however we get them.

P.S. Multiple store owners. Great meeting. Florida in February. Registration for our Multiple Locations Conference is open. More information at ncpa.org/multiple-locations-conference.

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



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AIP Spring Meeting

Sunday, March 13, 2022

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Registration: *(For Planning Purposes Please Fill Out and Return)*

Member's Name: _____ Nickname _____

Pharmacy Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address (Please Print): _____

Will you be joining us for lunch (12-1pm)? Yes _____ No _____; # of additional Staff/Guests: _____

Names of Staff/Guests: _____

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Jeff Lurey Retires after an Accomplished Career



(GPhA) announces the retirement of Jeff Lurey, RPh, GPhA, VP of Independent Pharmacy, effective January 1, 2022. "Jeff has had a long and accomplished pharmacy career. He's a pharmacy icon," said Bob Coleman, GPhA CEO.

Lurey grew up in Warrenton and then Winder, Georgia, graduating from Winder/Barrow High School in 1965. He then attended UGA, studying chemistry, and went on to UGA School of Pharmacy (1965-1970). When asked why he went into pharmacy, Lurey said, "I have always liked science and math. Pharmacy allowed me to combine the two disciplines and make a good living at the same time." He bought his first pharmacy in 1973, and eventually owned five other apothecary-style pharmacies, which

he sold in 1995.

"I think GPhA is the best state pharmacy association in the country (and has been for a very long time)," said Lurey. He has been a member of American Pharmacists Association (APhA) since 1967, and a member of GPhA since 1970. He is a member of GPhA, APhA, National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA), American College of Apothecaries (ACA), and many other social/civic/homeowner associations.

During his accomplished pharmacy career, Lurey served as the president of GPhA's 5th Region in 1980 and ran for 2nd vice president in 1982. That started a long period of leadership service in numerous positions within GPhA (2nd vice president, 1st vice president, president, and chairman of the board).

Lurey helped start the Georgia Pharmacy Foundation and served as its chairman for many years. He also served on the Georgia Board of Pharmacy (12 years), the UGA Vision Plus Board, and the UGA Alumni Board. He has received the following awards:

- GPhA Appreciation Award
- GPhA Bowl of Hygeia Award
- GPhA 50-year Plaque
- GPhA Mal T. Anderson Outstanding Region President Award
- Mercer University Southern School of Pharmacy Carlton Henderson Award
- Merck Sharpe and Dohme Leadership Award
- McKesson Leadership Award
- NARD (now NCPA) Outstanding Leadership Award
- UGA Vision Plus Award
- UGA Distinguished Alumni Award

When asked to reflect on his 50 years of pharmacy, Lurey told us the biggest change during his tenure was computers. He remembers using manual typewriters to type labels and filing prescriptions by hand, "counting and pouring, licking and sticking." Patient counseling (Medication Therapy Management (MTM) and Disease State Management (DSM) has also been a major impact on the services that pharmacists provide. Lurey said, "The most significant "negative impact" on pharmacy, in my opinion, has been the total take-over of our profession by Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBM). I am optimistic we will regain control of our profession and I hope I live long enough to see that happen."

Lurey is married to his wife Dale (for 51 years). They met at UGA in 1967 and it was love at first sight. They have one son, Alex (born 1974). Alex and his wife Tracy have two children, Richard (13) and Maren (10). They are all big animal lovers and have always had cats and dogs. The newest addition to the family is a cat named Willow. Lurey tells us he will eventually retire to Amelia Island, but will continue to visit Atlanta to see family and watch his grandkids grow up. We asked him what he plans to do in retirement, and he said, "Play a lot of golf." If you know him, you know that's right! "We look forward to continuing to work with Jeff in the future in a consultant capacity," said Coleman. On behalf of the Georgia Pharmacy Association and the pharmacy community, we wish him the best.



Thank You for Your Service, Dedication, & Friendship





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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