Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board

The Apothecary is the newsletter of the Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board.
It contains information on a wide variety of topics intended to enhance the practice of all pharmacists in the province of Newfoundland & Labrador.
All registrants are responsible for reviewing any and all information contained within including documents which are made available on the NLPB website via links throughout the newsletter.
The Apothecary is now circulated electronically and is available in hard copy format only upon specific request.

The Apothecary

Special Edition

Spring 2018

Pharmacy Awareness Month just concluded. Each year, the month of March provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the contributions our profession makes to the healthcare system. It is a time to reflect on the achievements of the past and to look forward with great purpose and pride.

Once again, over the course of the month, the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board released a series of vignettes highlighting pharmacy practice leadership in various settings throughout our province.

Through collaboration with key partners like PANL, the Department of Health, and Memorial University, our profession has come a long way over the years. In fact, it has changed dramatically, and for the betterment of our patients and for patient safety.

Maintaining the public's trust in the safe, effective and ethical delivery of pharmacy service is the Board's priority. As the regulatory body, one of the most important ways the Board can further enhance quality care is supporting pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working to full scope, ensuring the standards are in place to guide each and every professional in the field.

Since 1910, the Board has been governing the profession of pharmacy, currently promoting the highest standards of practice for each pharmacist, pharmacy technician, student and intern. We set the standards our patients can trust and rely on.

The Board is proud to celebrate our registrants. This special edition of the Apothecary illustrates the full and varied nature of pharmacy teams contributing to the health of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Margot Priddle

Registrar

THINK PHARMACISTS

VOLUNTEERING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

PROFILE

Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board Chair
Taggarty Norris

In 2004, Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board chair Taggarty Norris was a young pharmacy assistant when she witnessed something that inspired her and changed her career. While working at a pharmacy in St. John's, Taggarty watched her mentor help an elderly patient.

"I remember watching one of the pharmacists spend 15 to 20 minutes with an elderly patient who was prescribed a medication after knee surgery that could interact negatively with the current medication he was on. The pharmacist took the time to explain the medications, possible negative side effects and what to look for. I remember how appreciative the client was. It was then that I realized the profession was more than putting pills in a bottle, it involved having a major impact on people's lives."

After that Taggarty saw the profession differently. She was inspired to become a pharmacist.

From then on, Taggarty was compelled to give back to the profession beyond the daily patient interaction. Her work alongside several inspiring, female pharmacists, some of whom were also members of the board, prompted her to put her name forward as a volunteer.

"I found them to be an inspiration of how I'd like to practice. I thought, 'I can do that, let's give it a go!'"

Once on the board, Taggarty discovered that volunteering opened up a different side of the profession. For her, volunteering allowed her to see the bigger picture. It was a window into the many parts of what it means to practice as a professional pharmacist - the struggles and benefits of working in a self-regulated profession.

THINK PHARMACISTS

VOLUNTEERING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Taggarty's most memorable moment in her tenure as Board Chair was welcoming registered technicians into the profession. Taggarty is proud to be part of the movement that entrusts trained professional pharmacy technicians to help with the technical aspect of the job. She acknowledges the movement has been a vital evolution in allowing pharmacists the opportunity to practice to their full potential. "It's a really big step in the right direction, having trained professionals to rely on to take on those technical tasks."

Taggarty says her personal goal as Board Chair is to lead the next generation of pharmacists to get further involved and volunteer.

"I hope to be the one to inspire involvement." When asked what she would say to someone considering volunteering she said, "Go for it!" Taggarty says volunteering "was one of the best decisions both personally and professionally I've ever made."

She says volunteering for the board is a great way to see the knowledge of seasoned professionals blend with the expanded scope of knowledge coming from today's pharmacy graduates.

"Having everyone work together can bring new and different ideas to the board, which results in a well-rounded model of practice and better client care."

Finding the time to volunteer is a challenge for everyone and Taggarty is no exception. She is the managing pharmacist of the Lawtons Pharmacy in Paradise that sees hundreds of patients per day. She is also the mother of a busy two year old so balancing work, home, and volunteer expectations can be difficult. But, she says, it is not impossible.

"Having a flexible employer and fellow staff members who support helps. When I say I have board meetings or I have to attend this conference, there is never any issue, and planning ahead always helps."

Taggarty says any scheduling challenges are more than worth it. "Be prepared to learn a whole different side of your profession."

THINK PHARMACISTS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE NORTH

PROFILE

Pharmacy Regional Director
Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority
Amanda Ropson

As Regional Director for Labrador-Grenfell Health, Amanda Ropson is responsible for the pharmacy services in three hospital pharmacy departments, three community health centres, and 14 nurse-lead community clinics in addition to her role as Pharmacist in Charge of Charles S. Curtis Memorial Hospital in St. Anthony.

She enjoys her job, but it's not without its challenges and every day is something different. Amanda and her pharmacy team are often the only point of contact for pharmacy related services for nurses in rural clinics and health centres. Most of the communities are hours away from a pharmacy, some can only be accessed by plane. Then there's Mother Nature to contend with.

"We have to think about 'what if the weather comes in' or 'what if the transport is stalled', says Amanda. "Our supplier is not just down the road. We sometimes have to think outside the box if we can't get what we need up the road or in an hour."

Technology can also be a challenge when working in the north. The provincial electronic health record helps by providing complete, up to date patient records, but internet access is often limited in the north so Amanda works closely with her colleagues throughout the region to obtain the necessary information the "old fashion way".

"If there's connectivity issues then we have to revert back to paper documentation." A back up plan for when the internet is down is par for the course. Amanda also says, "In the age of moving away from paper it feels that we can't do that as quickly as we'd like because we always have to think about 'what about connectivity' or 'what if there's no access'."

THINK PHARMACISTS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE NORTH

PROFILE

Pharmacy Regional Director
Labrador-Grenfell Health Authority
Amanda Ropson

Like many areas in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, healthcare practitioner recruitment in the north can result in limitations of pharmacy services. There are services you want to offer but cannot due to the human resource constraints. The Regional Health Authority is very supportive, constantly recruiting and working diligently to try and bring increased pharmacy services to the area.

"You struggle because there is so much you want to do to expand and work to your full scope."

Working in the north gives you exposures to many different things that you might not come across in the larger centres. You see a broader scope of illness. Since a specialty hospital or clinic might be inaccessible to the patient for geographic reasons, you need to be proficient enough to provide a wider variety of services that might otherwise be handled by a specialist if practicing in a big city.

So why does Amanda persist? She loves the variety in her job. "Hospital pharmacy provides so many opportunities to have a positive impact on patient care and there are so many new initiatives that demonstrate the need for clinical pharmacy involvement and that makes the work rewarding."

THINK PHARMACISTS

TEAMWORK IN PHARMACY

PROFILE

Gary Batt
Pharmacist-in-Charge — Twillingate Pharmacy

What's a typewriter? You know you've been around a while when you hear this question from one of your students. Over the last 30 years pharmacist Gary Batt has witnessed firsthand the evolution of practice at Twillingate Pharmacy. As Pharmacist-in-Charge of an independently owned pharmacy, Gary's spent many days practicing in the dispensary by himself. "It was me, there was no tech, no assistant. I did it all from filling the scripts to counselling patients, to completing insurance forms, to doing resubmissions, to using the cash." Times have certainly changed and changed for the better.

Technological advancements have updated Gary's practice though electronic records and business management. These new systems brought into place more checkpoints and access to a patient's profiles, but technology isn't everything.

Enter Colleen Ings, a registered pharmacy technician that Gary now finds indispensable. The late 90's is when Gary remembers the change in attitudes. In the interest of patient safety, and with the advent of trained pharmacy assistants, pharmacists were encouraged to enlist the help of assistants in the pharmacy. With the move to registered technicians Gary says having a technician makes his life as a pharmacist a lot easier. "In the technical part, she runs the show."

Colleen says the respect goes both ways. "I really do have an awesome relationship with Gary. He really respects my opinion, and my knowledge as a registered pharmacy technician. We work really well together as a team."

Gary relies on his partnership with Colleen and the other members of the pharmacy team to provide patients exceptional care. Colleen works in the dispensary taking care of prescription preparation, filling blister packs and other technical aspects of pharmacy practice, allowing Gary to focus on patient follow up care, increasing the efficiency of his busy pharmacy. Gary says, "She goes above and beyond for all her patients."

Colleen's support also provides an additional layer of safety when dispensing medication to patients.

"It's an extra set of eyes, and extra check in everything you do. You also have more time to check in to adverse effects, and more time to follow up on anything that may present as a problem." Colleen says her role is challenging and rewarding. "I would encourage anyone to pursue a career as a registered pharmacy technician, the role as changed a lot and as a registered pharmacy technician it seems to be continuing to grow."

Gary's advice to those looking to hire a registered pharmacy technician? "Find someone you have total trust in, total faith in, and let them do their job. They are trained and accountable."

Professional Practice Webinars

The next Professional Practice webinar is scheduled for April 10, 2018 from 9:30-10:30 am. The topic will be *Ethical Considerations: Professional Liability and Your Patient*. This webinar will include:

- ⇒ An overview of the requirements relating to professional liability insurance;
- ⇒ A look at the Code of Ethics and how they relate to professional liability insurance; and
- ⇒ A discussion about why liability insurance is important to not only you but your patients.

To register for this event, please visit: https://nlpharmacyboard.clickmeeting.com/my-conference/register. Following registration, you will be sent an email with the event details as well as a reminder email before the event.

We aim to have a webinar either the second or third Tuesday of every other month. If you are not able to join us for the live session, a recording of the event and a copy of the handout will be posted to the **Professional Practice Webinars** page of the NLPB website shortly thereafter. We continue to welcome any feedback you may have on these or any other NLPB communications.

Please visit the NLPB website to view recordings of past webinars or to check the dates of upcoming webinars.

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