



NABP 100 YEARS
1904 PIONEERING A REGULATORY FOUNDATION
FOUNDATION FOR PATIENT SAFETY

President's Address

Presented by:

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Last year during NABP's 99th Annual Meeting, I spoke of a dream that no patient would be left behind by health care systems where patient safety factors like

monitoring and education are tossed aside by pharmacists who fail to assume the responsibility for the quality of care provided to their patients. This dream is becoming a reality. NABP took a huge step in furthering its mission of protecting the public health by launching two new strategic objectives: the patient safety initiative and the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program. What an honor it has been to prepare NABP for the next 100 years by launching these necessary programs.

Patient Safety – Our Mission Continues

NABP unveiled the patient safety initiative at the 2003 Fall Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, where I

announced that the Executive Committee added a goal to its strategic plan: to “lead the advocacy for quality health care and patient safety.” Following those remarks, NABP developed the Patient Safety Program, signaling NABP's commitment to this important initiative. The first order of business for the program is to work with the boards and other pharmacy and medical organizations to provide a regulatory foundation for the elimination of handwritten prescriptions and to further improve patient safety by the inclusion of indications on prescriptions.

Patient safety mandates that the transfer of vital patient-specific information between patient care professionals be clear and precise. We, as health care professionals, have an obligation to the public to use every avenue possible to increase patient safety and to reduce adverse medication events. The use of electronic and digital technology is at a point in its evolution that it is available and affordable. This initiative is aimed at fostering the movement of the

health care professions to a digital environment: an environment where a prescription is mechanically or digitally produced by the prescriber, electronically transmitted to the pharmacy or given to the patient, and then automatically entered into the pharmacy's computer without relying on human interpretation.

NABP realizes that this initiative is far reaching and affects various health care professions. As such, NABP's Patient Safety Program is becoming a major activity area, fully staffed and supported by the Executive Committee.

Continuing Professional Development

The evolving role of the pharmacist as the patient's medication expert demonstrates the need for a structure within the profession that supports its lifelong learning foundation. Competence, assessment of competence, and documentation of competence are controversial topics that have been hotly discussed and debated within pharmacy and the health

professions for more than 30 years. Continuing Professional Development moves this debate aside and, instead, recognizes that waves of new knowledge, technology, and new expectations for contemporary practice all create continual transformation of practice environments and the priority competencies required. For pharmacy, now appears to be an optimal time for *all* of the associations to collaborate and design a system that fosters and validates the lifelong learning needed to provide quality care to patients and define the new priority competencies.

In discussions with the other national pharmacy associations, the program was conceived to provide the venue for real planned lifelong learning with an emphasis on active, self-directed learning that fosters an ethical responsibility for maintaining and enhancing professional competence. The conceptual framework of the program made its debut at NABP's 99th Annual Meeting last year in Philadelphia. At the meeting, members voiced support and passed resolution 99-7-03 "to instill and perpetuate the concepts of continuing professional development in students and pharmacists" as recognition of the importance of this initiative by the state boards of pharmacy.

Central to the CPD program is a five-step process that begins with the pharmacist reflecting on his or her knowledge, skills, and

practice environment. This self-appraisal process generates an educational needs assessment or personal plan that, once constructed, is implemented and documented. The documentation of his or her plan resides in a portfolio currently in the development stage. The portfolio is evaluated to determine how the pharmacist has improved his or her area of practice. Self evaluation is most difficult for most pharmacists, as they rarely receive objective feedback on their clinical performance and knowledge base.

I am pleased to announce that development of the Pharmacist Self-assessment Mechanism™ (PSAM™) is well underway. The first PSAM item writing workshops were held in January and April 2004, with additional workshops scheduled for June and October. During the first item-writing workshops, experts in the area of pharmacy practice started to develop the assessment questions and feedback material. On completion of the PSAM, the pharmacist will receive the answers to his or her questions along with documentation as to why the answers were right or wrong. In addition, citations to references will be provided to the pharmacist allowing for easy access to material pertaining to the competency being assessed. The Web-based PSAM will be delivered to pharmacists in any part of the world at any time. With development of the PSAM on target, NABP anticipates a late 2004 release of the mechanism.

In other activities associated with the CPD program, NABP, in conjunction with the other pharmacy associations, is working to develop a standard format for pharmacists' portfolios of CPD materials. This could include extra courses, peer review, mentor review, and evaluation instruments that the pharmacist needs to review in order to improve his or her skills.

You have heard me say before that CPD is by far one of the most ambitious projects in which NABP is involved. This effort will span decades and, if successful, cause a monumental change in how pharmacists design and utilize continuing education programs. Ultimately, it will positively impact the care pharmacists provide to their patients. However, the success of the CPD project depends on the commitment of the other pharmacy organizations and acceptance of change by practicing pharmacists and employers.

As your president this past year, I have had the unique and awesome opportunity to observe the boards, NABP staff, and many individuals struggle with the daily responsibilities of the protection and safety of the public welfare. As I have watched you function, I observed first hand that "patient safety" is not just words in your vocabulary but a commitment. Each of you as board and staff members face immense

pressures from colleagues, other professionals, citizens, and various branches of government to “look the other way this time” instead of doing what is right and keeping the patient safe. It is a tough road, but you do it. I

want each of you to know that I am humbled by you and your skills, talents, and knowledge. In the upcoming challenges we face, it will take each of you and all of you to keep the focus squarely centered on the patients

and their safety. It has been an incredible honor to have served as president before such a group of brave people.

Thank you.