

Featured Article: NewSpring Pharmacy

Lucas Nyabero didn't immediately choose a career as a pharmacist. His interest and passion for pharmacy would happen later on after moving to the USA. Lucas, originally from Kenya, moved to Seattle in 2000. He had plans to further his education but wasn't sure what direction he ultimately wanted to go in so he pursued a couple of options. He was admitted into medical school but ultimately chose not to pursue this path because he had a family and knew this choice would take time from his family. Work, family balance is of paramount importance to Lucas and this is what eventually guided him toward pharmacy. He had a friend who worked in a hospital as a clinical pharmacist and mentioned to Lucas he should come in and shadow him to see what the job was all about, so he did. After two weeks of shadowing his friend, he was sold on pharmacy. He moved across the country to Boston to attend MCPHS and got his degree. After school, he gained experience as a pharmacist in a hospital setting. He worked at Scottsdale Healthcare for 5 years and then went to Arizona Heart Hospital. During this time he also moonlighted at Fry's and three other compounding pharmacies. After being an employee for a while, he became more and more interested in having the freedom to treat his patients the way he wanted and explore other areas within pharmacy to learn and grow.

He knew independent pharmacy ownership would ultimately be his goal and he and his wife, Wambui, opened NewSpring Pharmacy in Avondale, AZ. NewSpring is a full service compounding pharmacy focusing on overall wellness. He has been an owner for 3 years now and through this experience has learned a lot about himself—especially his strong likes and dislikes in the industry.

One of his primary concerns at his pharmacy is how important it is to him to treat his staff the way he wanted to be treated when he was an employee. He is very proud of the opportunity to influence and inspire his staff as they seek to further their education. He is as flexible with their schedules as he can be while they are in school because he believes in supporting personal growth and achievement. Lucas has learned to adapt as best he can to the low reimbursement environment (a very strong dislike). Never one to be scared of change, Lucas has wholeheartedly sought out and embraced other branches of business so he can offer innovative options to his patients and combat the low reimbursement climate. He currently offers pharmacogenomics testing and counseling on the results for his patients so they know which prescription drugs are best suited. Lucas is committed to proactive health for his patients and advises them on ways they can wean themselves off pharmaceuticals. He continuously seeks best approaches to care and business by getting out to conferences and networking events. Learning from others is the best way to get great & free advice.



Lucas is happy he made the leap to open his own store. His biggest reward has been being able to make time with his family (his wife works with him at the pharmacy), seeing his staff grow and be successful, and seeing his patient's progress. It's also rewarding when Doctors now call him to help them solve problems with mutual patients and ask his advice. It shows that he has earned their trust.

I asked Lucas to share some words of wisdom:

One of his biggest challenges when opening his business was learning how to adapt his business model based on a different payment scale from what he originally anticipated from PBM's. This is constantly a work in progress and will be adapted as the healthcare environment continues to change.

He also didn't realize how much time he would need to budget for a relief pharmacist so he can get off the bench to work on his business. His advice to new owners is to budget for at least 15 hours a week for a relief pharmacist so you can get out of the store to go to meetings, networking events, marketing, and also to think through processes, systems or changes you would like to make in your store. You should be the face of your business instead of hiring someone else to do this as you will need to control your message as an owner in the beginning.

From day one of opening your own store, always understand your cash flow. Manage your business using your cash flow statement and actualize it on a regular basis—weekly, daily. This way you can plan for what you can do if you run out of money in advance of it happening. Either you spend less, sell more or borrow but this way you will be ready to act before it happens. Look for your own personal business niche to set yourself apart. Don't just settle for one and be willing to change them as the healthcare industry will always be in flux. You must always plan to be ahead of the PBM's so you are able to sustain when they don't pay you. Always be proactive to protect your business by asking docs to change scripts if you won't get paid on something. Stay up to date on the pulse of the business environment by attending conferences, events, and mix with everyone. Find out how they think and what makes them successful. A support system is paramount for success and Lucas would like to thank his- **his wife Wyamboui and his three children- James, Kerubo, Tenzin.**

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RxPlus Mission

RxPlus Pharmacies, Inc. is an organization of health care providers which creates value by promoting the economic, professional, educational, and political advancement of community pharmacy. We do this for the health and well being of our communities.

If you find any errors or omissions, or if you have any comments regarding the Website, you can fill out the email form following the "About Us" then "Contact Us" button of the homepage!



President's Message

First, I would like to tell you how honored I am to be serving as the RxPlus President. We are celebrating our 35th Anniversary this year and that is only one milestone. This past year we passed a Bill in Colorado that recognizes a pharmacist as a healthcare provider. I know that seems minimal since we have always practiced as a healthcare provider in our communities and in some rural cases, the only provider in the area. We are working closely with other groups across the country to put you as a pharmacist in the forefront of patient care and get paid for those services.

This past year we also passed a bill in Wyoming that regulates PBM's under the Insurance commissioner's office. That is just the first step in getting them under control in that state.

Another very exciting milestone is the PBM's have gotten away with taking billions of dollars out of the system and have convinced regulators that they cannot be regulated without adding costs to the system. They have operated behind hidden doors so even health plans don't understand what they are paying for. That may be changing and not soon enough. With the eye on drug costs their little secret is coming out. You may have all seen the news on the Mylan Epipen and how the price has risen dramatically. Now even Pharma is turning on their partner and asking why and where the costs go. Another great example is the Anthem lawsuit against Express Scripts citing that their customers are paying \$3 billion more than they should.

9news in Colorado has recently ran a week long program on drug prices and one of the nights featured a piece on PBM's. If you missed that you can go to 9News and download the video. They will also air a 60 minute special to review what they have found at the conclusion.

Just maybe karma is soon to fall upon them!

David Lamb, Good Day Pharmacy

Executive Director's Message

During our last newsletter, I talked about the changing environment we are facing in pharmacy today. The current payment system as we have known it for the past thirty years is either going away or making it impossible to operate with the payments we are receiving. That is why it is so important to embrace the change and join other pharmacies across the country that are developing local networks of high performing community pharmacies. We are currently working with the group out of North Carolina that is supported with a CMS Grant to duplicate what they have done in their state. The most successful pharmacies are the ones that embrace this shift and take steps now to adopt a variety of clinical services valued by payers—in addition to their regular prescription business.

We know implementing these programs is no small task, let alone getting started in the first place, and what works for one pharmacy may not be the right fit for yours.

This only sounds like you need to make sweeping changes but that could not be further from the truth. Most of you are already doing the minimum requirements necessary to belong to this network. The problem is that even though you are doing many of valuable services today, nobody knows you are doing them and you are not documenting the outcomes of your patients. If you would like to know more, please give me a call.

On a much happier note, RxPlus will be celebrating our 35th Anniversary this year and we are planning a very special annual meeting for you. Be sure to mark August 18th-20th on your calendars. Our meeting will be held at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs. This is a beautiful property with many added amenities and attractions very close to the property.

Grant Kinn, Executive Director

“Time flies. It's up to you to be the navigator”. *Robert Orben*

Grant Kinn, Executive Director

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS REPORT

RxPlus Legislative Update by State
Brad Young

Cont. on page 4

Colorado:

Patient Choice Legislation for 2017 Update:

After the last legislative session we were approached by other health care provider lobbyists who expressed an interest in combining forces to prepare a comprehensive bill addressing patient choice and regulation of third parties that contract with health insurance companies. We have had three meetings and have come to the conclusion that there need to be two separate bills: one on regulation of third party administrators and one on patient choice. Those interested in patient choice include **chiropractors, optometrists and dentists**. Physical therapist and occupational therapists are interested in working with us on a bill regulating third parties but NOT on patient choice. Senator Crowder has allowed us to submit a bill under his name that includes both issues. It is a "work in process". The Colorado Medical Society has decided NOT to participate with us.

Medicaid:

Please note that due to legislation passed in the last session, you can now **send a Medicaid patient a prescription for maintenance medication through the mail**.

If you have not yet received your revalidation, keep working on it. The date has been extended, but the Department urges providers to **get revalidated as soon as possible**.

Myers and Stauffer will be updating the Actual Acquisition Cost (AAC) data through a random survey of pharmacies quarterly. The next update survey will be sent out January 1, 2017. We urge pharmacies that receive the survey to contact your wholesaler and ask them how to create the spreadsheet and send it in.

When **Medicaid AAC prices are below cost, we urge you to submit a rate review**. Go to RxPlus.com, click on "links", and click on the link that has the rate review.

We will be meeting with Medicaid soon to talk about pharmacists being able to bill Medicaid for additional services such as immunizations. Such billing may be possible after the department updates their computer programs in March. If you have suggestions, please let me know.

Legislative Updates

The following bills passed in the last session. Please let us know if you have an interest in providing input on implementation.

SB 135 Concerning Provider Status for Pharmacists:

Defines "Collaborative Practice Agreement" to include protocols between a physician or physicians, a pharmacist or pharmacists, and a patient or patients; and includes "statewide protocols" to be developed by the Board of Pharmacy, Board of Medicine, and Board of Nursing with the Department of Public Health and Environment. The Board of Pharmacy is working on rules to implement the bill. Staff members from the Board of Pharmacy are meeting with the other government agencies as required.

SENATE BILL 16-062 CONCERNING MODIFICATIONS TO THE REGULATION OF VETERINARY PHARMACEUTICALS: The bill creates a three-member **Veterinary Pharmaceutical Advisory Committee** in the **Department of Regulatory Agencies** to make recommendations to the Board of Pharmacy concerning issues related to veterinary pharmaceuticals.

HOUSE BILL 16-1095 CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR EARLY REFILLS OF PRESCRIPTION EYE DROPS. The bill requires health insurers to pay for additional eye drops for a patient under specific conditions.

House Bill 16-1324 Concerning Veterinary Access to Compounded Pharmaceuticals.

The bill modifies the Pharmacy Practice Act to clarify that a **pharmacy may provide a -**



Mark your Calendar

CPS 25th Annual Winter CE Seminar

January 7-11, 2017

Book online at CPS website

Classifieds

Robot for sale:

RxSafe ASP 20

Comes with a tower which holds up to 20 cassettes at a time. 150 cassettes specifically calibrated for medications as well as 20 universal cassettes (can be used for any type of pill or capsule).

Retail price: \$117,000.

Asking price: \$80,000

Inquire at: 480-883-3800



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Government Affairs Cont.

compound for office use by a veterinarian. A compound for office use that contains controlled substances may only be provided by a pharmacy with a DEA Manufacturer's license (as required by federal law). The Pharmacy Board is writing rules for implementation.

Wyoming:

After passage of HB0035 Pharmacy Benefit Manager Regulation: The Pharmacist Association has no plans for introducing any controversial legislation in the 2017 session. RxPlus will work with the Wyoming Retail Association and the Wyoming Pharmacy Association to monitor legislation during the next session on behalf of independent pharmacy.

2016 Arizona Legislation:

RxPlus members in Arizona are actively working with the Arizona Pharmacists Association and their lobbyist to develop and pass legislation. Ginger and Brad are working with the AZPA on a legislative agenda for the 2017 session.

Federal Issues:

The main federal issue we are working on is legislation concerning DIR fees. Congressman Coffman and Congressman Perlmutter have written letters to Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt at the Department of Health and Human Services in support of the June 14, 2016 letter from Congress concerning **CMS guidance on Pharmacy Benefit Manager DIR fees**. Congressman Coffman also sent a letter concerning the **Humana contract proposed amendments to its Pharmacy Provider Agreement for the 2017 Part D plan year**.

The federal bills on patient choice of pharmacy, MAC transparency, and Provider status have not progressed this year, although **we got strong bipartisan support from the Colorado delegation to Congress and the Senate for the bills**.

Political Committee Report:

Congratulations on setting a new all-time record for the **RxPlus Pharmacies Independent Political Committee!** We received contributions totaling \$13,750 during the 2015-2016 election cycle and contributed \$13,325 to candidates and State House and Senate political committees. We contributed to a total of 76 candidates and committees! The 2013-14 campaign cycle brought in about \$11,000. THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU WHO CONTRIBUTED!

