



MANITOBA INSTITUTE
FOR PATIENT SAFETY

Make It Personal: Interview Series

March 2, 2018

An Interview with Pharmacists, Barbara & Lesley

Barbara Bromilow and Lesley Worsnop are pharmacists committed to serving their community. They promote and enhance patient safety by developing a personal relationship with each person that walks through their door. Along with two other pharmacists and numerous pharmacy technicians, this team at Rexall in Beausejour goes beyond dispensing medication, and focuses on overall health through collaboration with patients and other providers.



The “rights” of medications

Providing the right drug to the right patient at the right dose is a patient safety mantra for pharmacists. But Barbara and Lesley say that “patient safety for medications goes far beyond that, and we tailor our practice to acknowledge that”. Barbara and Lesley have adapted the mantra to include ensuring the right means to take the drug.

To ensure the right means, Barbara and Lesley identify potential barriers for their patients in taking medications as prescribed, such as language or mobility, and then work with patients, family members, other care providers, and agencies to address these barriers.

Overcoming Barriers

Financial constraints are also a common barrier to taking prescribed medication. If a patient is finding a medication unaffordable, Barbara and Lesley will investigate whether or not there is a more affordable alternative to suggest to the prescribing physician. In the situation of someone who does not have enough money to pay for their medications until their next payday, Barbara and Lesley dispense just enough medication until the payday to avoid gaps in that individual’s medication regime. Barbara and Lesley also communicate directly with Canada Pharmacare to facilitate the processing of Pharmacare applications.

Another common barrier Lesley and Barbara encounter is memory difficulties. Barbara and Lesley ensure those who need it get their medications blister packed, or if more assistance is needed, they will suggest that the physician refer the individual to the Manitoba Home Care



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program for medication monitoring in the home. For home care clients, they also directly fax all prescription to the home care office to ensure everyone is working with the most updated information.

A lack of knowledge is the most common barrier. Barbara and Lesley take time to ensure patients understand their health condition, the medication they are taking for the health condition, as well as important lifestyle changes like diet and exercise. Barbara explains, “People manage their own chronic conditions, not the doctor, not the pharmacist. If you can’t convince someone about the importance of their treatment, they won’t do it. So we help people with one small change at a time to move them towards wellness. Research indicates that people forget up to 80% of what they are told in a doctor’s appointment, so we supplement and reinforce education.” Lesley says, “I like to walk by and check out what people are doing at the blood pressure machine. The machine provides an opportunity to dialogue with people about their health. Last week I helped someone understand that her heart rate was very high, and it prompted her to get the medical attention she needed.”

Personalized Care

Barbara and Lesley provide highly personalized care to ensure medication safety using practical tools. For example, they make medication calendars for people whose medication dosages will be changing over the course of a month or more. Or they will write the reason of the medication on the label of the medication bottle so patients know which medication is for which issue. They encourage patients to keep up-to-date medication lists, and they will make these lists for people who cannot make them on their own.

The Future is Bright

Barbara and Lesley are excited about some of the recent developments in pharmacy that have improved care and access to their patients. One example is being able to administer flu shots in their clinic. They have already administered 400 flu shots this season. The implementation of nurse practitioners in primary care means that more prescriptions include the reason for the medication, which better positions Barbara and Lesley to provide patient education. They hope that in the future, pharmacists in Manitoba will be able to access blood laboratory results, as this practice has resulted in positive patient outcomes in other Canadian provinces.

The Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety (MIPS) is an independent, not-for-profit corporation established in 2004 to promote and coordinate activities that improve patient safety and enhance quality healthcare in Manitoba.

Written by MIPS Volunteer, Cara Brown