



MANITOBA INSTITUTE
FOR PATIENT SAFETY

Make It Personal: Interview Series

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An Interview with Ryan Chan

In this interview, I had the pleasure of meeting Ryan Chan. Ryan wears many hats - he is a business owner, a licensed pharmacist and a community builder. While his many roles don't seem to tie together on initial glance, taking a more in-depth look reveals that all of his roles and activities are all linked to improving patient safety.



A Community-Oriented Environment

Ryan operates a pharmacy and a medical clinic in the core downtown area. Recognizing that medical spaces can be intimidating to patients, he has carefully curated the space to make it an extension of the community. Each patient room was designed by an architect to look like a small house, and thus a row of patient rooms looks like a street of homes in a community. Artwork that tributes Winnipeg, and was created by local artisans adorns the walls, and Ryan is currently in the process of bringing locally made products into his storefront space. Patients can feel like a part of this space, rather than outsiders.

Reaching Out Into The Community

One of Ryan's main passions is collaborating with charities to put on community events. He explains, "Working in the inner city helps you understand that many of us live very privileged lives. Seeing the experiences of my downtown patients firsthand makes me realize how most of my issues are minor in comparison to people who are living without a home, for example. Holding these events is a way to give back, makes my work more fulfilling, and gives me more purpose."

His last collaboration was an inner city health fair at Agape Table. For the event, he hosted a community barbeque that featured a local master chef. Physicians, medical residents and specialists came to the event and were available to consult with community members. Ryan shares, "For example, there was a urologist there, and community members could just walk up to the urologist and ask any questions that they had. This way, people could interact informally with the medical professionals - there was no need to wait at a doctor's office. It was a very



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casual environment where community members could have an experience of communicating with a health care professional.”

Building Trust Between Community & Health Care Providers

Ryan creates these welcoming environments that address people’s basic needs for feeling safe in order to facilitate the development of trust between patients and their medical providers. At Ryan’s community barbeque, people who may have little exposure, or past negative experiences with the medical system, can begin to develop a sense of trust with medical providers. The inviting environment at his clinic allows patients to open up, and develop meaningful relationships with pharmacists and physicians. And once this trust is gained, patients are in a position to gain knowledge from their primary care providers.

Knowledge is the Best Medicine

In relation to his work as a pharmacist, Ryan believes that patients need to know all of the “why’s” in relation to their medications. This includes: “Why am I taking this medication?”, “What should I look for in terms of side effects?”, “What is the ultimate goal of this medication?”, and “Do I need to take this medication?” To ensure that people gain the knowledge they need, Ryan tailors his education so that it is meaningful to patient. “For example, people might only know that they have high blood pressure and that generally it is bad to have high blood pressure. So I tell them more about how our body works in relation to blood pressure-why we want to avoid high blood pressure and how the things we do affect our blood pressure. This is important because it is patients that have the power to make changes for their health, I am just here to support that.”

Seeing patients that have improved patient safety by taking control of their health is the ultimate reward for Ryan. “The best thing about this career is when a patient trusts you and they come back and let you know that a suggestion really helped them. Seeing patients take new knowledge and take control and then come back to tell you they feel better, I can’t even explain how good that feels.”

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.

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