

“Change is on the Wind”



*By ASHP President Lynnae Mahaney, MBA, FASHP
Opening General Session
44th Midyear Clinical Meeting & Exhibition
December 7, 2009*

Introduction

That was an amazing performance, wasn't it? What a great way to kick off our Opening General Session. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff at ASHP, welcome to Las Vegas!

I'm so happy to be here with you, attending the best educational sessions offered in our profession, connecting with long-time friends and meeting new ones, and, of course, taking advantage of all the fun that Vegas offers.

I want to thank each and every one of you for being here. We know that it is a sacrifice to leave home and job to participate in this meeting. We know that the work you left behind is growing as we speak. And we greatly appreciate your commitment to the profession as well as the time you are spending here reconnecting, learning, and being part of ASHP.

Health Care Reform

You know, it's been an interesting six months since my inauguration in June... We all continue to be affected by unprecedented economic challenges. We are dealing with the ongoing challenge of the H1N1 pandemic, especially our colleagues in the emergency department. And we've watched as Congress has struggled with the critical issue of health care reform.

But there is good news! This is a fabulous better time to be a pharmacist. There are so many opportunities for us to show how we improve patient safety and outcomes through rationale medication use. And it's never been more critical to be a member of the community that is ASHP.

This community has come together in an unprecedented way to send an important message to Congress: *Don't leave pharmacy out of your plans to improve health care.* We continue to tell Congress that pharmacists in hospitals and health systems play critical roles in patient care. And we need to be recognized and compensated for that care. As pharmacists, we have much to contribute to innovations in quality, technology, and evidence-based medicine.

ASHP has been aggressively working on your behalf, using every avenue available. That includes submitting written testimony... meeting with Congressional and White House staff... working with stakeholders to create a united front... and acting as your voice on the issues of

“Change is on the Wind”
ASHP President Lynnae M. Mahaney

provider status, federal loan forgiveness, and funding of second-year pharmacy residency programs.

And you, as ASHP members, have paralleled these efforts. You’ve called your Congressmen and women. You’ve written letters. You’ve participated in ASHP’s Legislative Day. You’ve contributed to ASHP’s Political Action Committee. You’ve invited local legislators to your facilities to show them what you do each day...

There is even a pharmacist who is serving as the ASHP-ACCP-VCU Healthcare Policy Fellow to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. This powerful committee, formerly chaired by Senator Ted Kennedy, is a pivotal player in the health care debate. And Stephanie Hammonds has had the unique opportunity to get involved in historic legislation.

This steady drumbeat of activity has been a significant force in keeping our profession’s concerns front and center. And I’m happy to report that all of these efforts have paid off. Congress is beginning to listen!

Both the House and Senate versions of health care reform do two significant things related to pharmacy: Under a new grant program, pharmacists in all practice settings and in new care delivery models such as “medical homes” will provide medication management services to chronically ill patients. This is a real chance to demonstrate the value of pharmacists’ services. And it takes us another step closer to recognition as providers.

In the House bill, pharmacy graduates who commit to practicing in underserved areas of the country would be able to tap into an expanded student loan forgiveness program.

These measures will help improve outcomes for our nation’s most vulnerable patients. They will also contribute to reduced costs for the health care system.

Pharmacy Practice Model Initiative

As we talk about the future of health care reform, we can’t forget that the future of pharmacy practice is still unwritten. We are in a unique time, in which today’s pharmacy school graduates are being prepared to contribute greatly to patient care. But our current pharmacy practice models don’t always support these new capabilities.

So, we are starting to see a disconnect between what pharmacists currently do and the aspirations of pharmacists who **want** to do—and are **trained** to do—more. They want to contribute in new and different ways to patient care. But the systems in which they work often don’t support those kinds of roles.

Pharmacy has an incredible well of talent that patients need. And practice leaders need to begin to tap this talent more actively and more effectively. We risk seeing pharmacy practice become an ancillary service. And we risk extinguishing the passion of new practitioners if we don’t move in a new direction. We truly need a revolution of change in our profession.

“Change is on the Wind”
ASHP President Lynnae M. Mahaney

To begin that revolution, we have to start a spirited dialogue about what our profession should look like in the future. We need to have this national conversation because drug therapy in hospitals and health systems is riskier and more complex than ever.

We need it because pharmacists who are already stepping out onto patient floors are proving the value of a medication expert at the bedside... and other health care providers are beginning to see this value and ask for more services.

We need this conversation because there must be consistent practice models that support the role of pharmacists as patient-care providers and leaders in medication therapy management.

And, we need it because health care reform will mean a seachange in quality; and as our hospitals come under increased pressure to adopt best practices, they will require our skills and knowledge as *the* medication-use experts.

So, together with the ASHP Foundation, ASHP has developed a Pharmacy Practice Model Initiative to begin examining these important questions. This multi-year Initiative has a number of components. These include a consensus summit, a robust social marketing campaign, and demonstration projects.

We're so excited because the Initiative will focus on five areas to shape the future of our profession:

- It will foster the creation of new pharmacy practice models that ensure ALL hospital and health system patients receive safe, effective, efficient, accountable, and evidence-based care.
- It will point the way to patient-care related services that should be consistently provided by departments of pharmacy in hospitals and health systems.
- It will identify which technologies support this new practice model.
- It will ensure that pharmacy resources are deployed as efficiently as possible.
- And it will identify specific actions that we can ALL take to bring about practice change.

As you can imagine, changing our pharmacy practice model is a bit like turning a massive cruise ship. It takes a lot of manpower, skill and determination, resources, and agreement among all of us that this is necessary and doable. But I am standing here today telling you that this CAN be done. The Pharmacy Practice Model Initiative is an investment on behalf of all members... we are ALL responsible for changing what is possible in pharmacy practice.

To help kick off this effort, ASHP is planning a multidisciplinary, invitational consensus summit. We have a long history of hosting such summits. The 1985 Hilton Head conference that focused on clinical directions for the profession of pharmacy... the Pharmacy in the 21st Century

“Change is on the Wind”
ASHP President Lynnae M. Mahaney

Conference in 1989... and the San Antonio Conference on Implementing Pharmaceutical Care in 1993.

The next significant summit will be ASHP’s Pharmacy Practice Model Initiative Summit. It will be a critical step toward understanding the challenges that face us and the opportunities that are available to us.

But ASHP is not simply hosting a Summit. That is simply one piece of a multi-pronged, multi-year effort. We want the Practice Model Initiative to be an ongoing conversation that happens among all members, and we are encouraging pharmacists to participate through a number of avenues.

You’ve probably read some of the editorials and other articles that have been appearing in *AJHP* over the last year about practice change. We have a robust Web site with lots of resources for you to delve into. And there will be wide-ranging discussions on ASHP Connect, our online community. Change will only happen at every hospital if EVERY pharmacist gets involved. This is your revolution!

I am very excited to announce today that two industry partners have come on board in corporate support of this important effort. McKesson Corporation is leading the way at the elite level, with its grant of \$250,000. Omnicell, Inc., has been named a Gold Level supporter, with \$100,000 in funding for the Initiative. I want to thank McKesson and Omnicell for their generous support—these resources will help us launch the Initiative and get started on this important work.

Conclusion

You may be sitting there wondering how you can get involved. Actually, the answer is the same for both health care reform and practice model change. The answer starts with each and every one of us. We each need to be pharmacy warriors and look for opportunities to make changes.

In terms of health care reform, look for chances to renovate the care transition policies within your own institutions. A key component of health care reform is prevention of patient readmissions to the hospital. How can you contribute to that goal?

Also, watch for chances to collaborate with other health care providers to show what you can do to improve quality and patient outcomes. The future is in your hands, and ASHP is with you all the way.

We can all be excited and proud of what is beginning to happen in health care in this country. We all own a piece of this legislation. As we move into the 2010 elections, it’s more important than ever that pharmacists stay in the discussion...

So, take a moment and stop by the Membership Information Center to get more information on how you can become a grassroots advocate and how you can contribute to ASHP’s Political Action Committee.

“Change is on the Wind”
ASHP President Lynnae M. Mahaney

For the Pharmacy Practice Model Initiative, we urge everyone to get involved. Watch how the Initiative unfolds and see where you fit in. Listen to your fellow pharmacists, contemplate what they are saying, and participate in the dialogue.

If you have a chance, come by the session called “Redefining the Practice Model: Where Have We Been, and Where Do We Go” on Tuesday from 2 to 5 p.m., in Room 3104 Lido. It’ll be your first taste of this exciting dialogue about practice change. We are truly on the verge of something amazing!

Rest assured that ASHP is absolutely dedicated to helping you do the best job possible for your patients. While you are working to keep your patients well, we are working to ensure that you have all the opportunities and resources you need as a clinician.

Thank you!