Pharmacists Making a Difference

MPA Members Go Above and Beyond to Advocate for Your Profession

By AMANDA LICK, M.A., MPA manager of advocacy, governmental and regulatory affairs

We take our advocacy efforts seriously and try to do our best to speak on behalf of our membership and the patients they serve, encouraging lawmakers to engage in and enact policies that make Michigan a model in health care delivery.

MPA advocates for the pharmacy profession in many ways. For instance, we follow current issues and make note of the concerns that matter most to our members. We work to communicate and offer solutions to lawmakers to ensure the safety of patients. We work to educate the public on the various roles of pharmacists, including innovative practice. We advocate for collaboration with other health care professionals and educate them on opportunities to work with pharmacists to deliver innovative health care and increase access to primary care. We do all of this because we care. We work hard to ensure that everyone knows what we already know, that Pharmacists Make a Difference!

Advocating for pharmacy is a job that requires all hands on deck. Each one of us has an obligation to the patients served and to the pharmacy profession to make health care in Michigan the best it can be. Many people do not realize that advocacy comes in various forms. Each type of advocacy effort is different, but we all have the time to get involved one way or another. For instance, every opportunity that you take to teach someone about pharmacy and talk about your profession, you are participating in advocacy. If you help a legislator by knocking on doors or putting up lawn signs, you are advocating. Any time you meet with and engage lawmakers, write a letter or make a phone call, you are portraying the efforts of an advocate. You can also donate to the Michigan Pharmacy Political Action Council to help support those candidates who believe in pharmacy. All of the examples listed above are advocacy opportunities and they are your chance to make a difference in your profession. Some take minutes and others take more time, but there is an advocacy opportunity that meets everyone’s abilities!

We rely on our members to join us in working on our advocacy efforts. The members highlighted in this article are exemplary pharmacy professionals who have been advocating for patient safety and fair business practices in pharmacy. Often, the individual member made the initial contact with their legislator, helping them understand the problem and introduce legislation. The members in this article went above and beyond to include MPA in on their conversations so that we could be a part of helping to craft the language of each bill and ensure that we all have a united message. The members in this article also make advocating for their profession look easy!

Read their stories. Find out who they are and what they are doing to make a difference in the lives of pharmacy professionals and patients across the state. To join their efforts and get involved, contact Amanda Lick, MPA manager of advocacy, governmental and regulatory affairs, at Amanda@MichiganPharmacists.org. There are many opportunities out there such as joining MPA's new Pharmacy Advocacy Response Team (PART) that allow you to do your PART for the pharmacy profession (see page 16 for more information)!

Mike and JoAnn Sanborn
Senate Bill 656

Mike and JoAnn Sanborn purchased their pharmacy in 1982. For more than 30 years, Hudson Pharmacy has been delivering exceptional patient care. When I visited the pharmacy, I was taken back to a much simpler life, as the pharmacy itself is situated inside a quaint grocery store in a town that is reminiscent of all that is good in America. Hudson Pharmacy, however, is not what it seems; it is so much more than that. Inside, you will find Mike and JoAnn working hard to meet the needs of their patients while managing their business. You will see pharmacy professionals and staff engaging patients and delivering thoughtful, fast and accurate care. Pride exudes from all those who practice at Hudson Pharmacy and it starts at the heart of the business: with Mike and JoAnn. The Sanborns are pharmacists, entrepreneurs and advocates who care about their profession and the patients they serve, and it shows. Over the years, they have both been engaged with their legislators such as Rep. Nancy Jenkins, U.S. Congressman Tim Walberg and Sen. Bruce Caswell advocating for issues like Senate Bill 656, which
focuses on Maximum Allowable Cost pricing transparency. It is through their relationships that they are able to educate and advocate for fair business practices in pharmacy.

**Andrew Reeves**  
*Senate Bills 999-1002*

Andrew Reeves has always been pushing the limits of pharmacy as a forward-thinker, and when you walk into his pharmacy, it’s immediately obvious. OptiMed Pharmacy, which began in 1994, has several locations. I visited the pharmacy nestled on a one-way street in a shopping district in the heart of Kalamazoo. This store boasts a new way of thinking about pharmacy, and that theme stands true as you enter the door and wander the aisles. As I talked with Andrew and he gave me a tour of the facility, I learned that the store is highly engaged in the community, participating in nontraditional pharmacy opportunities such as art hops and wine tasting. They offer products that promote an all-natural way of life, including travel equipment, supplements, food and makeup lines, as well as skincare services. Situated below the storefront is their specialty drug division, where staff members work hard to meet the needs of some of the most complex patients. Andrew and partners are pushing the envelope of pharmacy innovation to ensure patients get quality, safe and cost-effective health care. With a state Senator and Congressional leader working across the street, Andrew has the opportunity to engage policymakers on his lunch hour. He took advantage of that opportunity by connecting with Sen. Tonya Schuitmaker and encouraging her to introduce a bill package focused on the regulation of pharmacy benefit managers and fair business practices.

**Scott Popyk**  
*Senate Bill 704*

Since 1996, Scott Popyk of Health Dimensions has been engaged in what inspires him: making things. Compounding pharmacy seemed like a natural practice setting for this Wayne State University graduate. His career path led him into the field, beginning with basic compounding services for long-term care patients and then adding sterile infusion services. In 1996, he decided to focus completely on compounding and open Health Dimensions. As Scott walked MPA Fellow Ashley Builta and me through his pharmacy, to say he was full of pride is an understatement; he gladly showed us all the intricacies that exist in the compounding realm of pharmacy. We also discussed the difficulties that face the profession; however, Scott strongly believes in what he does and how it helps people. With each compound, he feels like he is making a difference in the quality of life and disease state of each of the patients served by him and his pharmacy. That is why he cared so much about Senate Bill 704, the compounding legislation that passed in Michigan earlier this year. Scott wanted to make sure that the compounding practices he holds dear, the ones that make a difference in so many patients’ lives, would not be subjected to unwarranted limitations. Scott stepped up when given the opportunity to voice his opinion by getting a national organization involved as well as attending a hearing and testifying. Scott believes that advocacy for your profession is important and as he so poignantly stated in our interview, “you have to [advocate]; if you don’t, you may not like the circumstances you are dealt.”

Want to get inside advocacy tips from our expert members? Make a contribution to support Michigan Pharmacy PAC this year and you will receive a copy of The Advocate Annual Report, where you can learn more about the advocates above as well as other engaged pharmacy professionals. Plus, you will get details on legislation, MPAs advocacy efforts and an overview of what Michigan Pharmacy PAC has done to help Michigan residents and the practice of pharmacy! Visit [www.MichiganPharmacyPAC.org](http://www.MichiganPharmacyPAC.org) to find out more about our efforts and to contribute today.