



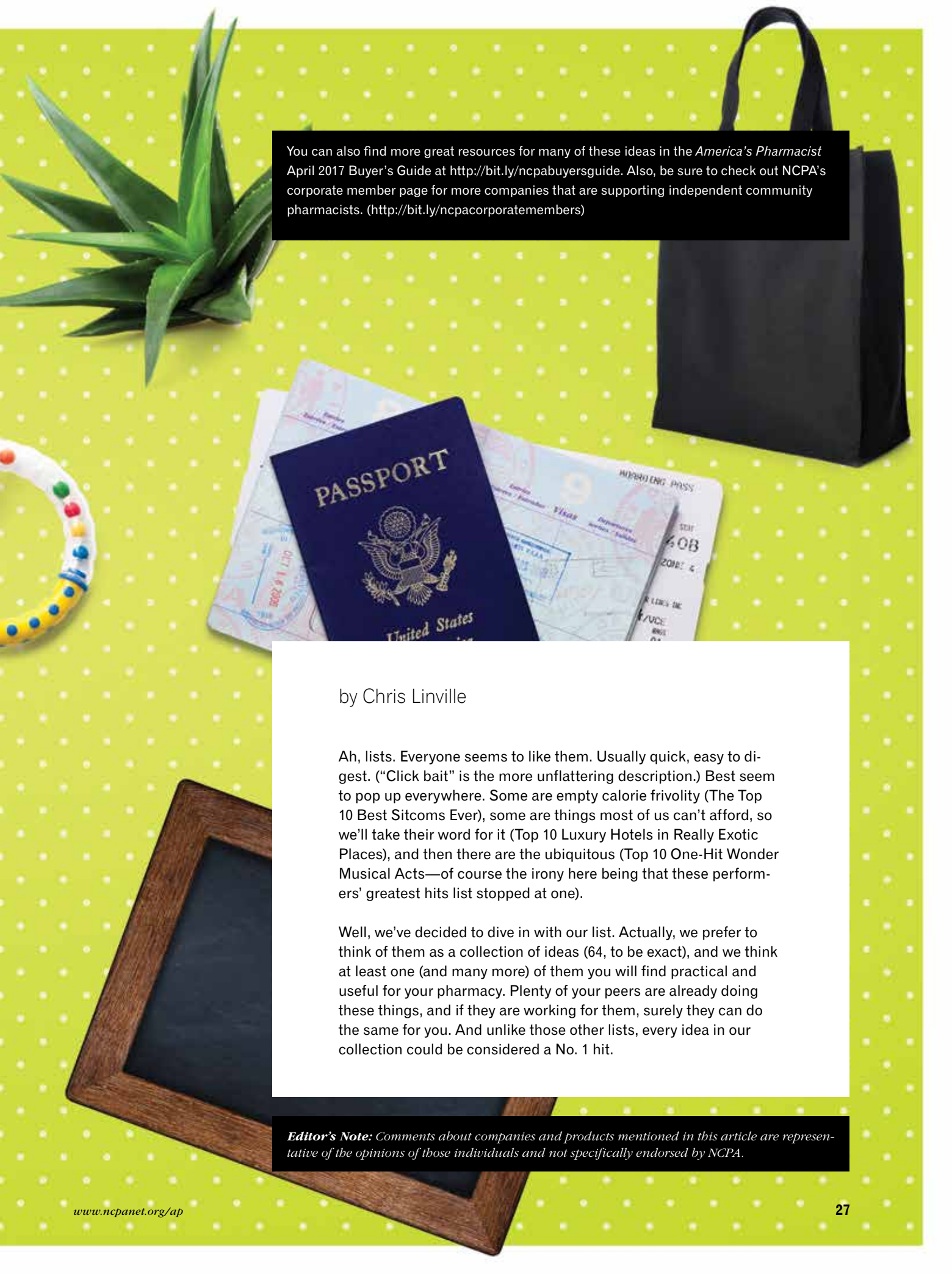
# *The* **IDEA** *Issue*



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*64 great ways  
to advance your  
pharmacy  
practice **NOW***





You can also find more great resources for many of these ideas in the *America's Pharmacist* April 2017 Buyer's Guide at <http://bit.ly/ncpabuyersguide>. Also, be sure to check out NCPA's corporate member page for more companies that are supporting independent community pharmacists. (<http://bit.ly/ncpacorporatemembers>)

by Chris Linville

Ah, lists. Everyone seems to like them. Usually quick, easy to digest. ("Click bait" is the more unflattering description.) Best seem to pop up everywhere. Some are empty calorie frivolity (The Top 10 Best Sitcoms Ever), some are things most of us can't afford, so we'll take their word for it (Top 10 Luxury Hotels in Really Exotic Places), and then there are the ubiquitous (Top 10 One-Hit Wonder Musical Acts—of course the irony here being that these performers' greatest hits list stopped at one).

Well, we've decided to dive in with our list. Actually, we prefer to think of them as a collection of ideas (64, to be exact), and we think at least one (and many more) of them you will find practical and useful for your pharmacy. Plenty of your peers are already doing these things, and if they are working for them, surely they can do the same for you. And unlike those other lists, every idea in our collection could be considered a No. 1 hit.

**Editor's Note:** Comments about companies and products mentioned in this article are representative of the opinions of those individuals and not specifically endorsed by NCPA.



1

**ADHERENCE—COMPLIANCE PACKAGING**

Organize patient medications into blister packs by dose per day. You can charge for the service and increase compliance.

**ADHERENCE—DELEGATE TASKS TO A TECHNICIAN**

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Many pharmacy owners fall into the trap of taking on the responsibility of implementing and managing their pharmacy's adherence program entirely by themselves while still trying to run their business. A pharmacy technician (or other member of the pharmacy team) can manage 95 percent of the day-to-day operations of the adherence program, only involving the pharmacist for clinical assessment.

3

**ADHERENCE—SYNCHRONIZE DELIVERY PATIENTS BY NEIGHBORHOOD**

Cut down on delivery costs by dividing your delivery area into quadrants and syncing medication for patients in the same part of town to the same week of the month.

~ *Max Caldwell, RPh, Caldwell Discount Drugs, Wynne, Ark.*



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**ADHERENCE—SYNCHRONIZE A FAMILY'S PRESCRIPTIONS TOGETHER**

For the busy parent struggling to take care of her young children and her own aging parent, aim to make her life a bit simpler by synchronizing the whole family's medications to the same day.



5

**ADHERENCE—SYNCHRONIZE PATIENTS BASED ON PRIMARY DISEASE STATE**

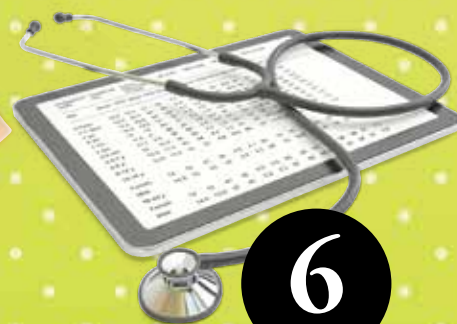
If all of your diabetes patients are due to come in during the third week of the month, you may consider offering diabetes education classes or a special on diabetes socks during that time. This strategy also may make sense for bulk ordering of medications as well.



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**CLINICAL TRIALS**

Help recruit patients for clinical trials going on in your community through HeroLinx, and get your patients the earliest access to pipeline treatments and add a revenue stream for your pharmacy.



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### **COLLABORATION—BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PRESCRIBERS**

Physician payments are increasingly being tied to quality, and the prescriber community is looking for resources to improve patient outcomes. Ensure your area prescribers know about your pharmacy's delivery, medication synchronization (med sync), packaging, medication therapy management, and other services that may help patients take their medications appropriately. There are a variety of prescriber detailing resources available at [www.ncpanet.org/marketing](http://www.ncpanet.org/marketing).

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### **COMMUNICATIONS—SEEK OUT ALTERNATE METHODS**

Look at ways to minimize call volumes using chat bots, text messaging apps, and other ways of communicating with customers, insurance companies, and physician groups. A lot of these calls can be streamlined, and your technicians probably prefer alternate methods of communication over picking up the phone unless it's necessary.

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### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH PHARMACIST HEALTH PRESENTATIONS**

Offer your pharmacist expertise for presentations to increase health literacy and your presence in the community. Consider hiring an employee to schedule and promote these presentations for you. Doing presentations at places such as senior centers and assisted living facilities are a terrific way to provide outreach and build trust with patients. Offer to give a presentation at your local rotary club or business association on the importance of chronic care management. You might get a wellness program with an employer group or at the very least a new flu clinic location out of the deal!

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### **DELIVERY DRIVER**

Utilize your delivery personnel for more than just your pharmacy's personal UPS man. Train them to ask the right questions of the patients you don't see and report back any potential signs of worsening health outcomes. Use technology to allow the pharmacist to Facetime or Skype with the patient for counseling, improved adherence, and more loyal patients.

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### **CURB APPEAL—PHARMACY REMODEL**

Give your pharmacy a face lift. Remodeling the inside/outside of the store can energize staff and the community and draw in new customers.

*(Editor's note: See Gabe Trahan's front-end merchandising tips at [www.ncpanet.org/feo](http://www.ncpanet.org/feo) for expert advice on building your curb appeal both inside and out.)*

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### **ESSENTIAL OILS**

Become an expert in, provide education for, and sell essential oils and the accompanying products including diffusers, mixing vials, and spray containers. One pharmacy in Texas is turning nearly \$30,000 in essential oils inventory every month. Be sure to do your homework and find a brand that has the science to back up their products.





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### IMMUNIZATIONS— TARGET YOUR MARKET

Be proactive with your immunizations. Target patients based on their age group and disease states, and recommend immunizations to them that they might not have been aware they needed.

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### MANAGEMENT TOOLS— INVENTORY

"After having just purchased a 40-year old pharmacy, we had some issues with overstock, short-dated product, and incorrect inventory levels (high and low). Inventory management was our first thing to tackle. We signed up with [www.matchrx.com](http://www.matchrx.com) and took a brief tour, then got a demo. The bottom line is that we have been on MatchRx for a very short period of time (less than 90 days) and have sold more than \$37,000 in unnecessary inventory. We have been shocked and I am now a believer. We have also bought some items to save another couple of thousand dollars."

~ **Eric Shoffner, BPharm, PD,**  
**Gammel's Clinic Pharmacy,**  
**Crossett, Ark.**

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### IMMUNIZATIONS—TRAVEL

Travel vaccines have become a popular service for many pharmacies. You can become the pharmacy version of a travel agent by informing patients about what immunizations are needed/required based on country or region, and any health alerts that might affect their travel. Organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)) have apps that tell you which travel vaccines are needed for travel to which countries.

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### INVENTORY MANAGEMENT— PERPETUAL INVENTORY

Use a perpetual inventory system to generate as much as \$60,000 per pharmacy in improved cash-flow. Inventory is your biggest expense, so it makes sense to do what you can to minimize how much you carry.

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### MARKETING— COPAY ASSISTANCE

Offering prescription copay assistance as a service can increase patient access to medications. We've noticed it has resulted in more referrals from practitioners in our area. Some pharmacies are also saving money for their patients by finding them manufacturer coupons for brand name drugs.

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### MARKETING— HOLIDAY OUTREACH

Reach out to your patients on holidays. On Valentine's Day, send individual birthday cards or a box of chocolates to patients who have lost a spouse or partner to build lasting relationships with your customers.

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**MARKETING—REFERRAL GIFTS**

"Provide goodies such as fruits, pizzas, and gift baskets to doctors and local chain pharmacists as a 'thank you' for referring patients to your pharmacy. Also, detail all of the chains in your neighborhood."

~ *Eric Shoffner, BPharm, PD, Gammel's Clinic Pharmacy, Crossett, Ark.*



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**NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS—PROFESSIONAL GRADE**

"Consider using proprietary branded professional quality nutritional supplements to increase recognition of the independent pharmacy in the marketplace and establish an ongoing nutritional revenue stream in the pharmacy. Several professional quality vendors are offering proprietary labeling for their product lines. Utilize the advantages that independent pharmacies have in this area to generate new profits in those independent pharmacies."

~ *John Preckshot, RPh, CCN, FAARM, director, Wellness Works Nutrition, PCCA, Houston*



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**NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS—PROBIOTICS**

Proactively seek out patients who should be on probiotics and recommend them as they fill prescriptions for antibiotics. This will increase revenue and can decrease adverse effects, especially in the elderly population.

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**NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS—APPROPRIATE USAGE**

To address drug-induced nutrient depletion, schedule appointments or use med sync appointments with patients to discuss nutrients and supplements they should be taking based on effects from medications they are taking either chronically or intermittently.

*(Editor's Note: NCPA has a nutrient depletion CE online at [www.ncpalearn.org](http://www.ncpalearn.org).)*

~ *John Preckshot, RPh, CCN, FAARM, director, Wellness Works Nutrition, PCCA, Houston*

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**OPERATIONS—GOOGLEKEEP**

"We have found GoogleKeep ([keep.google.com](http://keep.google.com)) to be a great way to keep our staff (especially our field sales/marketing team and relief pharmacists) up-to-date on new policies, price changes, new staff coming aboard, and other operational news/info. When someone posts a new item, they send an email to all staff to let them know the GoogleKeep has an update."

~ *Jennifer Hogue Bruckart, director of operations and compliance, WeCare Pharmacy, Warrenton, Va.*

**OPERATIONS—MONEY SAVING TIPS**

Check your monthly expenses and look for ways to save. For example, there's lots of competition among the phone service providers - check them out and see if you can get your costs down.





### Wait, There's More

Thought we were done with ideas? Well, pharmacist Rick McCoy has five more. He owns Lopez Island Pharmacy in Lopez Island, Wash., with his wife Marge. Over the years they have always been interested in learning about and trying new ideas. Rick McCoy shares several here.

#### 25 Collaborative Drug Therapy Management

"For documentation of our actual patient encounters under CDTM (collaborative drug therapy management agreement), there isn't a pharmacy software program out there that does this," McCoy says. "So you need an electronic health records system. I reviewed and tried several, and I found that the best for the small-scale pharmacy operation is Practice Fusion ([www.practicefusion.com](http://www.practicefusion.com)). It's free."

#### 26 Medical Billing

"Along with collaborative drug therapy agreements, some pharmacy software doesn't do a good job on major medical billing for CDTM's or some vaccinations," McCoy says. "There is another free online program called OfficeAlly (<https://cms.officeally.com/>)."

#### 27 Employee Time Clock

"The Employee Time Clock ([www.webtimeclock.com](http://www.webtimeclock.com)) is a web-based system," McCoy says. "It is inexpensive and has features such as no early clock in or no late clock outs. It has a free trial. We've used it for years, had very few issues and when we have, their tech support is great."

#### 28 Microsoft OneNote

"For years in Microsoft Suite I ignored OneNote ([www.onenote.com](http://www.onenote.com)) until I saw someone use it correctly. Then the light bulb came on for me," McCoy says. "I've seen many pharmacies have books or cheat sheets for third-party plans, compounding, daily procedures, or anything else. Very quickly these cheat sheets become obsolete or are lost; OneNote solves the problem. Activate it at everyone's workstation and then you can have only the Notebooks that each workstation needs active on that workstation. Store all the Notebooks on Microsoft Cloud Storage (OneDrive for Business) and all the workstations can access them, even from home. Plus, you can set it up so changes can be made from any workstation."

#### 29 Temperature Monitoring

"I looked into this years ago, and it changes by the day. I looked at what our clinic/hospital uses," McCoy says. "A rule without exception is that if it's dedicated for medical use, it's expensive. I'm not a fan of blue-tooth, as range is the main issue. I use [www.tempalert.com](http://www.tempalert.com) products. They make a whole line of products from cellular to Wi-Fi. I use two of their Wi-Fi products for our two refrigerator/freezer units. Each device has two probes, so I have one probe in the freezer and one in the refrigerator section. I have them send me email alerts and they save the logs to a database."

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#### OPERATIONS—SMART NOTEBOOK

Invest in a smart-notebook (as low as \$27). You can take notes, upload them electronically to your computer, and place it in the microwave when you want to erase the pages and start over.

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#### OPERATIONS—SIMPLIFY WORKFLOW BY CHANGING COLOR BASKETS

Changing the color of baskets to correspond to the days of the week allows you to know what days patients are picking up prescriptions and whether they are behind or ahead of schedule.

#### Want to learn more about new ideas?

Be sure to attend this year's NCPA Annual Convention in Orlando, Fla., Oct. 14–18, 2017. Find out more at [www.ncpanet.org/convention](http://www.ncpanet.org/convention). Many of the ideas in this article were shared at last year's NCPA Convention.

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### OPERATIONS/MARKETING/ ADHERENCE—PARTNER FOR REFERRALS AND COLLABORATIVE SERVICES

Identify and partner with independents in your area for referrals and collaborative services with doctors. For example, in one city, three pharmacies are partnered in such manner with a pediatric hospital. It can channel families to the pharmacies who end up staying with them instead of the big chain stores.

*(Editor's Note: NCPA and Community Care of North Carolina have partnered to form a nationwide Community Pharmacy Enhanced Services Network (CPESN-USA) to help catalyze the formation of local pharmacy services networks. See <http://bit.ly/ncpaoncommpharmacy2017> for more details.)*

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### SERVICES—COMMUNITY CLASSROOMS

Include space in your pharmacy to offer education-based classes for the community, such as diabetes or wellness classes. This provides an opportunity to engage with the community, educate patients, answer questions and address concerns.

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### OPERATIONS/WORK- FLOW—DELEGATE TASKS

Designate technicians to a single task (i.e., synchronization technician), reallocating an asset that you have already to optimize efficiency.

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### PRODUCTS—SKIN CARE

One pharmacy's staff was trained to recruit patients from 30-40 miles away for discounted prices on skin care products.

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### SERVICES AND ADHERENCE— KIDNEY DIALYSIS DELIVERY

Decrease delivery costs by delivering medications to kidney dialysis patients while they are at dialysis. This allows you to link up the deliveries and target patients to transfer to your pharmacy.

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### SERVICES—DIABETES EDUCATION CENTER

Devote a specific area for diabetes education. Work with primary care physicians to gain referrals to your program for newly diagnosed patients. Depending on accreditation and your state laws, you may qualify for reimbursement from Medicare.



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### SERVICES—HEALTHY FOOD LUNCH COUNTER

One pharmacy has a lunch counter business where it serves healthy meal options along with ice cream and soy-free, gluten-free options. It also started a lunch-lift program with a personal trainer. Patients come to work out and leave with a lunch of their choice.



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### SERVICES—BREAST PUMPS AND SUPPLIES

Consider a “Baby Center” in your pharmacy. Carry supplies for babies as well as specialty products and items and offer the opportunity for people to open a registry for baby showers.



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### SERVICES—IN-STORE FLU CLINIC

When flu shot season rolls around, offer an in-store clinic. This will help with workflow and increase the speed at which you are able to administer the bulk of your flu shots.



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### SERVICES—NICHE OFFERINGS

Divide months for specials like discounts and incentives. One pharmacy mentioned that it collaborates with a nearby tattoo parlor, providing nipple tattoo care kits. The pharmacy collaborates with a tattoo parlor that does reconstructive nipple tattoos after mastectomy. Most people looking for the nipple tattoos are breast cancer survivors who are hesitant to go to the tattoo parlor. The pharmacy has been able to partner with the parlor to offer tattoo after-care kits and counsel these nervous women on what to expect to prevent infection.



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### SERVICES—MTM AT THE CLINIC

Rent rooms at the primary care physician office to offer your MTM. This brings the service to the patient where they already have an appointment scheduled.

43

### SERVICES—PHARMACOGENOMICS

Offer pharmacogenomics testing and consulting at the pharmacy.





#### **SERVICES—POST-SURGERY PACKS**

Compile “packs” with all of the supplies patients need after surgery. The patient can come in and say he needs a hip or a knee pack, and everything is already bundled together. Work with local surgeons to plan on what should be in each pack.



#### **SERVICES—LONG-ACTING INJECTABLES**

Dispense and administer long-acting injectable medications for patients requiring antipsychotics and other long-acting injectable medications. Patients can set up appointments to receive the injection.

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#### **SERVICES—POINT-OF-CARE TESTING**

Enhance revenue and improve patient access to care by screening, diagnosing, and monitoring for chronic diseases. Offer point-of-care testing for influenza, strep A, HIV, and hepatitis C. If the opportunity exists in your community, consider setting up a collaborative practice agreement with a local prescriber to prescribe oseltamivir during flu season.



#### **SERVICES—SURGICAL COMPRESSION STOCKING FITTING**

Advertise surgical stockings within your pharmacy and encourage your patients to allow you to properly fit them for the right pair. You can order the exact pair to fit their needs, reducing the amount of inventory you have to keep on hand. Always sell two pairs so they can have one to wear while the other is in the wash.

#### **SERVICES—SUMMER CAMP MED PACKS**

Partner with summer camps to package medications for each of their campers. Many camps require unit-dosed packaging.



#### **SERVICES—VETERINARY COMPOUNDING**

Tap into taking care of your patients and their entire family – all the way down to their fur balls. Offer veterinary compounding services. Offer special chicken, beef, or tuna flavoring to make the pets happy.



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**Reaching Out to Promote Poison Safety**

Don Grove, RPh, owner of J & D Pharmacy in Warsaw, Mo., says he and staff from his pharmacy visit local schools each year during National Poison Prevention Week each year. He says it shows the pharmacy's commitment to the community, and it doesn't hurt business either. Not a bad idea.

"Our marketing director calls ahead to set the date and time with the school principal and to also get the count of all the kids from kindergarten through second grade," Grove says. "Supplies are ordered from the state Poison Prevention center (such as brochures, poison stickers, magnets, and key reminders) for kids to take home. A customized poison prevention newsletter is also prepared, complete with color sheets and games about poison prevention for the kids."

Grove continues, saying, "This is a minimal investment, and often times the poison center will provide many supplies for free. The marketing director coordinates and gathers everything together for the pharmacist to take with him/her the day of the event. What is powerful about this promotion are the contacts that are made. The pharmacist spends less than one hour a day for two days and touches hundreds of kids and gets the pharmacy name in each home through the take-home packets. Kids get so excited and animated when they have something special happen at school that they talk about it when they get home. It's a good return on investment of your time to get your name in that many homes promoting health and safety."

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**SMOKING CESSATION**

Smokers cost employers \$6,000 more a year than nonsmokers on average, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Make a pitch to a local employer in your community to offer employer-sponsored smoking cessation classes in the workplace. You could help patients quit smoking, and pick up a little business along the way.

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**TRAINING TOOLS—  
DME TRAINING**

"In our home medical department we use training software called DME Train ([www.dmetrain.com](http://www.dmetrain.com)). It allows you to set up your employees by job description and builds an education program for that individual. What is really unique is it allows different levels of competency testing. For example, you can build an education program for a customer service representative (CSR) level 1 or 2. After the CSR goes through the education and testing modules, it allows them to continue on to a higher level of positioning. With each level they pass it makes that employee more valuable to you and you can give raises based on actual performance on what they know and do for your business, not just give them a raise because 'it's time.'"

~ Don Grove, RPh, J & D Pharmacy Home Medical Supply, Warsaw, Mo.

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**TRANSITIONS OF CARE—  
WORKING WITH HOSPITALS**

Partner with your local hospital to manage medications for patients who are discharged after a stroke or CHF. This will bring in more patients to your pharmacy while improving outcomes for the hospital.

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**VALUE ADD—OTC MEDICATION/SUPPLEMENTS**

"Don't miss the opportunity to sell patients any needed vitamins or OTCs well ahead of their appointment time. When patients come in to pick their prescriptions, their OTC medications can be ready with all of their other medications."

~ Don Grove, RPh, J & D Pharmacy Home Medical Supply, Warsaw, Mo.

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**VALUE ADD—  
WORK MTM CASES AND  
IMMUNIZATIONS INTO THE  
APPOINTMENT DATE**

The patient's pick-up date is a perfect time to market other pharmacy services that would be beneficial for the patient. During the pre-appointment call, ask the patient if his appointment date would be a good time to sit down and talk about his medications or get his shingles shot, and then staff accordingly.



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**WEIGHT LOSS—SUPERVISED PROGRAMS**

"Our pharmacy recently affiliated with Ideal Protein ([www.idealprotein.com](http://www.idealprotein.com)) to run a medically supervised weight loss program, and while it's new here, the program is great. It's very safe and monitored, with a full medical and scientific staff available for risky patients or questions, and it is medically oriented at diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cholesterol. It is also profitable for our small pharmacy. We've already had a clinic contact us about a 523-pound patient who is not a candidate for surgery—he's worried about his life and they asked us to take on the case. This is preventive care and good health care of a kind that is hard to find in the U.S., and pharmacists are perfectly placed to operate safe and effective weight management programs. No other health care practitioner is embracing this role, even though all are aware of how foundational weight is to so many disease states."

~ **Matthew Maker, PharmD,**  
**Donlon Pharmacy, Decorah, Iowa**

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**340B CONTRACT PHARMACY**

Pay as little as pennies on the dollar for medications by becoming a 340B contract pharmacy. You have to evaluate this opportunity carefully, but many communities still have a need for 340B contract pharmacies to care for the most vulnerable patients.

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**WEIGHT LOSS—  
SUPERVISED PROGRAMS**

Incorporate Take Charge Nutrition, LLC ([www.takechagerx.com](http://www.takechagerx.com)), created by Terry Forshee, RPh, in Cleveland, Tenn., into your pharmacy. The program focuses on functional foods, education, encouragement and direction.



Chris Linville is managing editor of  
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