Last month, a patient came to see us with her son who interprets since she does not speak English. Every member of her family was infected with COVID last March. As a result, she does not feel safe going outside and has been staying at home ever since. Her blood sugar has been low, which makes her tired and dizzy, and she is so anxious about her family’s health and well-being that most days she lies in bed awake until 4 or 5 a.m.

Her son owns a small restaurant, which he has been struggling to keep afloat during the pandemic. He admitted that he had been on the edge twice. “I wanted to kill myself. I am glad I did not have a plan,” he cried. “I feel so hopeless, and I want to be able to take care of my parents.”

At the Charitable Pharmacy, we not only help our patients with their medications but also provide them and their families with mental health and wellness support. After our advanced pharmacy intern gave the patient her medications, she also suggested ways her son could improve his mood and where he could go for help when he feels desperate.

He is grateful that we help his mother with her prescription medications, which takes some burden off his shoulders. “I truly appreciate talking to you,” he told our intern. “It makes me believe there is still hope.”

Check your eligibility and schedule your COVID vaccination at https://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov.
Pharmacy joins national vaccination effort

Once again, we find ourselves grateful to serve as a local solution to a national crisis. We received our third allocation of COVID vaccine last week. To date, we have vaccinated 300 people and look forward to vaccinating many more.

People have been delighted to receive their vaccines. We have also encountered some who were hesitant. Fortunately, we have been able to dispel myths around the vaccine during the one-on-one conversations that lie at the heart of our practice.

Excitement builds for new Linden Community Pharmacy

Renovation continues at the Charitable Pharmacy's newest venture—the Linden Community Pharmacy. Located at 1464 Cleveland Avenue, this added location will embody the philosophy of "food as medicine" inasmuch as it will be co-located with a Fresh Market managed by Community Development for All People.

The unfortunate truth is that an individual's ZIP code often determines the quality of their health care. "We're looking forward to our second location in South Linden where we can partner with the community," Executive Director Jennifer Seifert said. "Everyone should have access to fresh food and to the medicines and pharmacy services needed to enhance health."

A hybrid grand opening (virtual and onsite) is being planned for this summer. Stay tuned for further details!

You can ensure all Franklin County residents have access to their prescription medications.

Make your gift today at www.charitablepharmacy.org/donate.
Osteopathic Heritage Foundation joins Linden Project

We are thrilled to announce a generous gift from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, which will help us to purchase medication, underwrite a third pharmacist resident position at the Linden Community Pharmacy, and introduce a new cloud-based patient qualification system to coordinate care between the new location and our downtown hub.

"We are pleased to support the Charitable Pharmacy with a $175,000 funding award to open its new location serving the Linden neighborhood," said Susan Beaudry, Foundation Vice President. "This innovative effort will provide comprehensive pharmacy services and increased access to healthy foods, which is among the Foundation's top priorities. Among the core principles of osteopathic medicine is a focus on disease prevention. The new services offered in Linden by the Charitable Pharmacy will help more vulnerable people access the nutrition, medications and information needed to promote health, prevent illness and enhance their quality of life."

Farmacy in the City addresses malnutrition, food insecurity

In 2019, we introduced a tool to measure food insecurity and malnutrition in our patient population. Not surprisingly, both are high among our patients. To better serve them, we began to collaborate with MidOhio Food Collective in February 2020.

We also introduced our Farmacy in the City program in late 2020 to improve patients’ access to fresh produce, thanks to funding from AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation’s Connections for Cardiovascular HealthSM Next Generation program. All services are provided at no cost to participants: prescription medication, prescriptions for fresh food, cooking classes, meal planning ideas, and tools to self-monitor their progress.

Participants work with staff to set their own health goals, such as trying new heart-healthy recipes or making meals using the MyPlate method. They receive incentives such as Kroger gift cards, crockpots, and cooking utensils for reporting their blood pressure and body weight back to the Charitable Pharmacy during follow-up phone calls. Staff also ask about current produce consumption so patients can choose activities and set goals to increase their intake.

So far, the program has been well received. "I had no idea there were so many places I could go to get food!" one participant exclaimed. "My sister is a diabetic, so eating healthier—you know, fruits and vegetables—is important for her, too. So she's excited to come with me [to fresh markets]. I like it because of that."

We look forward to introducing the program at the new Linden location, where one of those Fresh Markets will be in the same building.
Pandemic throws spotlight on social determinants of health

While the social determinants of health have been part of the national healthcare discussion for many years, the pandemic has served to highlight the disparities, from transportation to a safe home to access to education. We work hard to identify patients who are food insecure, in need of safe shelter, or suffering from malnutrition and link them to food and housing resources to meet their basic needs.

To expand our efforts in this area, we hired licensed Community Health Worker Nathan Whitford and introduced a program in conjunction with The Ohio State University College of Social Work to host undergraduate students completing their field placement requirement. Two students now work with Patient Services Manager Beth Collier, who we believe to be the first social worker in the nation to join an all-pharmacy team and, like our pharmacy interns, provide direct patient services.

Seifert recognized for outstanding community engagement

Executive Director Jennifer Seifert received the 2020 Outstanding Community Engagement Award from The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy this past November. The award recognizes "an alumnus for outstanding accomplishments in community engagement.” The Charitable Pharmacy enjoys a close relationship with the college as we host 5 advanced pharmacy interns each month on clinical rotation. To date, more than 550 students have spent time in direct patient engagement at the pharmacy.

"We are very proud of the outstanding work Jenni Seifert has been doing with Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio," said Henry Mann, Dean of The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy. "Her award cites Jenni's deep interest in reducing the barriers to improving health that poverty imposes. Jenni constantly advocates for the most vulnerable members of our community and is a wonderful example for all of our Buckeye Alumni. We are delighted that she has received this recognition."

"I believe our students represent our greatest engagement and impact in the community," Seifert said in her acceptance speech. "My hope is that when they come across the face of poverty later in their careers they will be more knowledgeable, more comfortable, and more effective in helping those patients. I am grateful to facilitate that engagement and know it will continue to ripple into our community and far beyond for decades to come.

Thank you for your support!

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by email, please contact us at charitablepharmacy@gmail.com.