

Communities Shape Our Lives and Practice

Sonya Frausto, PharmD, MA, FCPHA

Springtime is often associated with renewal, new life, cleaning out closets, and preparing for more relaxing time with family and friends. For many of us, springtime is also filled with numerous conferences, budget seasons, appraisals, and frequent flyer miles. Hopefully, one can squeeze in a little vacation to enjoy the warmer weather and perhaps read a good book or article. For me this time of year sparks a sense of reflection on what I have experienced since the beginning of the year and what I can improve upon going forward. This past spring, I attended the Western Pharmacy Exchange (WPE) conference and was immersed in learning, networking, and celebrating the profession of pharmacy.

After coming back from WPE conference in San Diego, I thought about my experiences and how the “community” of pharmacy is so encompassing. We had educational sessions on clinical standards, legal aspects, inspirational talks, leadership development, and networking opportunities, just to name a few. Each of these events drew together different “communities.” What was clearly apparent was the importance of cross pollination of people from different “communities”; we are all needed to contribute to the generation and integration of new ideas. This is the value of conferences. We stay interconnected through conversation, networking, and learning together, which benefits our profession.

A community is loosely defined as a group of people who share common interests or values. So that got me thinking about how our lives are affected by micro-communities, not only those at WPE but those in our daily lives. We have our nuclear “community” that is our family, our extended “community” that includes our friends, our weekend warrior “community” that helps us manage our projects and activities, and perhaps a social network “community” that can include our virtual connections, and the list can go on and on. It seems like we have many micro-communities that impact our lives at various stages, including different touch points in our day and week.

Our network of “communities” contributes to our professional and personal harmony. The conversations we have with our patients or our kids help us grow exponentially. The articles we read in this journal help us think of innovative practice opportunities and brainstorm ways we can better serve our “communities” through knowledge and care. Each of these “communities” we engage with helps challenge us to be better than we were before. In addition, the interactions we have with our “communities” can impact other “communities,” as we then become intertwined. These connections can be varied over time as a response to our needs. Through these connections we can bring new “communities” together, and that is when the rich learning and development happen.

The journal is an excellent example of how “communities” of specialized practitioners share their knowledge with a host of other “communities” to help expand our role as clinicians. This is an additional avenue to stay connected while we try to improve our professional knowledge. Each article is an opportunity to grow, share, and interact with professional “communities” to improve the welfare of others. Sometimes these articles help

shed light on controversial topics that spark conversations or movements, and other times they just leave us consumed in our own thoughts.

Personally, the experience I have had with various “communities” has allowed me to grow individually and professionally. I know that my knowledge has been strengthened through others either by their presentations or articles. My volunteer “community” has kept me humble and appreciative of the ability to contribute to others. My work “community” has given me challenges to better my environment and the lives of patients. My social “communities” have kept me balanced and laughing. As you read through this journal, think about the “communities” with which you can share this knowledge. Build a connection that may not exist already. You never know where that “community” can take this journal, our organization, or our profession!

About the Author

Dr. Sonya Frausto is currently the Pharmacy Care Manager at Raley’s Family of Fine Foods where she oversees the clinical programs conducted at 98 Raley’s Pharmacies. She has gained her experience as a pharmacist through a variety of practice sites including being a district manager for a large drug store chain and in academia for 7 years. Her passions in pharmacy include advancing the clinical practice of community pharmacists through medication therapy management, immunizations, women’s health and immunizations. She is actively involved in mentoring pharmacy students and has been an avid supporter of leadership opportunities that allow student pharmacists to become leaders once they transition to practice. She graduated from the University of Southern California with her PharmD., in 2003 with a concentration in geriatrics. In 2006 she obtained her Master’s degree in Gerontology from USC. As an active member of CPhA, she is currently on the Editorial Review Committee and an Assistant Editor for the *Journal of Contemporary Pharmacy Practice* and also serves on the legislative committee. She is a past recipient of the CPhA Distinguished New Practitioner Award.

