



## The power of collaboration

by Wayne Glowac

Her story began like many others I've heard. Zarina Jalal was encouraged by her father to pursue a career in community pharmacy. And now, Dr. Zarina Jalal, PharmD, RPh, is the supervising pharmacist at Lincoln Pharmacy in Albany, N.Y.

This is a story of collaboration and success. It's about leveraging the power of other like-minded pharmacy owners to work together to not only improve the health of their communities, but also to break into a new model of prosperity.

As challenges mount for pharmacies relying solely on dispensing, discovering new ways to not only survive but thrive is an important marketing goal.

Jalal credits her passion for collaboration to her father. "Ever since I was a little girl, I would watch other pharmacies thrive in neighborhoods around our pharmacy and my dad never looked at them in an anti-competitive manner," she says. "We're not competitors. We have to be collaborators, because ultimately our goal is to serve the community where we practice."

It was after Jalal joined CPESN® USA that she fully realized the power of collaboration to improve the health of her community while enhancing the success of her pharmacy.

"It resonated with me," she says. "It's been an ideal that I can really work with. I believe in it."

One significant opportunity that came to the CPESN Upstate New York network was a behavioral health program with the Alliance for Better Health. Lincoln Pharmacy was one of seven pharmacies that participated in a pharmacy enhanced services program. It was designed to address gaps in care for people with a behavioral health diagnosis who are on prescription medication and who frequently use emergency services and/or are disconnected from primary care. The program tailored medication regimens to individual needs, increased adherence rates, and shared documentation of clinical interactions between pharmacists and patients with other care team members through shared electronic medical records.

"The industry average in terms of adherence in the behavioral health population is about 55 percent," Jalal says. "And when you look at the data from our behavioral health project, CPESN Upstate NY pharmacies were in the 80 percent range for adherence."

She says the improved medication adherence and other success metrics attracted the attention of the state Medicaid program and network leadership was asked to present the data at a statewide symposium for Medicaid providers. As a result, all participating pharmacies became eligible for a payment for high-performing providers and shared a substantial amount of money.

"In addition to the payment that we received for providing the service, we also became eligible for an additional payment, because our data showed that we were part of a high-performing network of providers," Jalal says. "This really proved the power of the CPESN network and changed the course of my pharmacy financially."

Another significant benefit Lincoln Pharmacy realized with their collaboration with CPESN was during COVID-19. "I implemented a point-of-care testing program using the best practices resources available through CPESN," Jalal says. "It made a big impact because COVID testing was so scarce in our neighborhood. The guidance for vaccines and monoclonal antibodies was also really great."

As we move into a new phase of COVID, Lincoln Pharmacy is continuing to work with its fellow CPESN Upstate NY pharmacies to innovate as they evolve from a standard dispensing model to more patient-oriented services, including test and treat programs.

Thank you for all you do every day to enhance the health of your community. Please remember the power of collaboration. If you have questions or want to discuss any ideas, challenges or opportunities, you can reach me at [wayne.glowac@gmail.com](mailto:wayne.glowac@gmail.com). ■

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