

**PHARMACY:** Springfield Pharmacy, Springfield, Pa.

**EDUCATION:** Temple University School of Pharmacy, 2006

**GETTING OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE:** “It’s scary to put yourself out there, but if you want change to happen, you have to put yourself in uncomfortable situations. I’m not a politician. I’m a straight shooter with my patients, but for me to see change, I have to do something about it. Some days I feel discouraged, some days I ask myself why I’m doing this – I’m not being paid for this – and lots of people think I’m headed for a political career. The part people don’t see is that I had to get involved in my community and speak up concerning pharmacy, and the way pharmacists are viewed – even in my local town here.”

**GETTING INTO ‘GOOD TROUBLE’:** “I started making noise. I call it getting into good trouble, but it means making things happen. I stepped out of my county and my state and into the federal realm, which is why people know about me, but at the end of the day, I’m able to tell my patients’ stories because they trust me. I’ve owned this pharmacy for 12 years and the business of pharmacy has changed over time – rapidly. If something doesn’t happen soon, a lot of great pharmacies and pharmacists will go out of business, and at the end of the day, it’s the vulnerable patient population that will be affected the most.”

**NEVER STOP SPEAKING OUT:** “I don’t know if my voice will make a difference, but I’m not going to stop. I can’t stop. I was at the (NCPA Congressional) Fly-In and I was on Capitol Hill in a meeting and we were going around the table and introducing ourselves to the senator we were visiting. I’m the only minority in the room, and I was the only person that the senator asked who my representative was. The only one. He didn’t ask the others about theirs. He singled me out. So, I composed myself and answered the question. But, afterward, I was talking to someone else who was

there in the room, and she said, ‘Well, he wanted to know if you could vote. If you were a citizen.’ So, in the next meeting, I changed my approach and I said, ‘Hello, I’m Chichi, I’m American, I was born in New Jersey, and I know who my representative is, and here are the issues that matter to me.’ I see this as a way of disarming the other person and getting them to pay attention to my patients’ stories, and then I can drive the point home.”

**EDUCATING ELECTED OFFICIALS:** “Local legislators or senators or governors don’t know what PBMs are. They don’t know that a whole school district was unable to send 400 people to school because there’s nobody available to administer meningitis and TDAP vaccines, and meanwhile we could have done it without red tape. I have to break things down for people because then, if they understand, they can lobby for us. If they don’t get it, they can’t. So, I do a lot of educating. Sometimes it’s about legislation. When I go to Harrisburg, our state capital, and I tell people that one pharmacy is closing every day and we’ve got pharmacy deserts, I also tell them which bills matter. Whether it’s good, bad, or ugly, I follow up with those legislators, too – I text them, I let them know that I’m with them and I follow them, and I am paying attention to their job. Making them feel like human beings, just as I’m asking them to pay attention to me.”

**WHAT NCPA MEANS TO ME:** “I love what NCPA does when it comes to PAC and I love that NCPA puts their money where their mouth is when it comes to educating and advocating – consistently. When (NCPA CEO) Doug Hoey called me and asked me to be part of the White House roundtable, I was delighted, and NCPA did everything they could in their power to work with me to help me with my presentation and giving me information. I was nervous as heck, but they empowered me. When the Biden Administration reached out and asked me to introduce President Biden, NCPA helped me again, and it was great.”



## **Chichi Momah, PharmD**

an interview with William Richards

Photo by Ed Cunicelli

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