



The Pharmacist Activist

Volume 15, No. 21 • December 2020

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Matthew 1:21

PEACE ON EARTH

At this same time of year in which many throughout the world are celebrating the birth of Jesus, the realities of COVID, conflicts, and wars dominate the attention of countries and individuals. It has been my observation that many of those who can look to the future with hope and optimism find encouragement from their strong faith in God. We should intentionally take time out of our typical non-stop schedules and reflect on our faith, even if it has not previously been important, and derive meaning and encouragement from God’s messages in Scripture and from the words/melodies of Christmas carols and other songs/festivities of this season. One such message/song that has an enduring theme and is particularly timely is “Let There Be Peace on Earth,” *, the words of which are below:

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth,
The peace that was meant to be.
With God as our Father
Brothers all are we,
Let me walk with my brother
In perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me,
Let this be the moment now;
With every step I take,
Let this be my solemn vow:
To take each moment and live each moment
In peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

*By Jill Jackson and Sy Miller: Copyright 1955, 1983 by Jan-Lee Music, ASCAP.

Editorial

Immunization and Other Public Health Opportunities for Pharmacists

In the 1990s, John Gans and his colleagues at the American Pharmacists Association, demonstrated the vision and leadership that resulted in pharmacists being provided the authority for administering vaccines. The underlying concern was that a large number of individuals were not receiving immunizations to protect them against preventable diseases. With strong support and collaboration from government/public health officials, national and state pharmacy association leadership, boards of pharmacy, and many individual pharmacists, and over a period of years of dedicated perseverance, pharmacists now have the authority in every state to administer immunizations. I consider this to be one of the greatest accomplishments of our profession in the last 50 years.

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The COVID-19 pandemic, or anything similar, was certainly not anticipated in the 1990s. However, the value to individuals, society, and our profession of authorizing pharmacists to provide immunizations is even more important now than when this authority was implemented. As the most accessible health professionals, pharmacists are strategically positioned to not only participate in COVID-19 testing, but also to administer the vaccines when they become available. The high level of trust that society has for pharmacists will also be of great value in educating and reassuring patients and communities about the effectiveness and safety of the vaccines that many might otherwise refuse or be reluctant to receive.

Even with pharmacists having the authority to immunize, millions of Americans are still not receiving influenza, pneumococcal, and other immunizations that will substantially reduce societal health risks and deaths. The COVID-19 pandemic will require the participation of many qualified professionals for the foreseeable future and, combined with other current and anticipated needs for immunizations, will necessitate an extensive and focused effort to greatly expand the provision of products and services of recognized value. Pharmacists are ideally situated to build on their important contributions to the health of the public by increasing the effectiveness and safety of medications. We have an established and convenient location and bridge to expand our involvement in providing immunizations and participating in other public health initiatives. Pharmacies can become the health education and immunization centers in their communities. Some pharmacists are already making “house calls” to their patients to provide immunizations, medications, and services. Some are actively engaged in smoking cessation, weight management, fitness, nutrition, and other programs that will improve public health.

The primary responsibilities of practicing pharmacists will continue to be the provision of medications and error avoidance, in a manner that assures optimum effectiveness, safety, counseling, and therapeutic outcomes. However, our professional roles and services can be readily extended by greater involvement and integration with immunizations and other public health initiatives. The opportunities and benefits are many and include:

- Wellness and healthcare services for individuals and communities will be increased;
- There will be increased communication and collaboration of pharmacists with physicians and other health professionals in their mutual commitment to meet the health needs of patients;
- There will be increased visibility and respect for pharmacists and their roles in providing health education, products, and services;
- There will be entrepreneurial opportunities for pharmacists that will increase the financial viability for pharmacies whose survival is threatened by inadequate compensation for medications and services.

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Appreciation

This issue marks the completion of the fifteenth year of the publication of *The Pharmacist Activist*. The index for this Volume 15 (2020) is included. All issues in Volumes 1 through 15 (2006-2020) are available on the website, www.pharmacistactivist.com.

I wish to express my appreciation to Linda Corvari, and to the officers of the Delaware County (PA) Pharmacists Association for the financial support they have provided for the publication of *The Pharmacist Activist*. Linda is a friend and former student, and is the Founder and President of p-value communication (www.pvaluecomm.com). This support helps make it possible to continue to make this newsletter available free-of-charge via email to interested pharmacists and student pharmacists.

Appreciation is also extended to Jeff Zajac (Publications Director) and Pat Polli (Publisher), and my wife and Assistant Editor Suzanne Hussar for their expertise and skills in editing, preparing, and distributing the issues of *The Pharmacist Activist*.

Best wishes for a blessed Christmas season and a healthy and enjoyable new year!

Dan Hussar

THE GREAT BARRINGTON DECLARATION

As I finalize this issue of *The Pharmacist Activist* on December 6, I have just read the Great Barrington Declaration about the COVID-19 pandemic, the central tenet of which is Focused Protection. It is the most impressive, rational, and common sense commentary about the pandemic that I have seen. As of December 6, it has been signed by 37,893 medical practitioners, 12,662 medical and public health scientists, and 682,246 concerned citizens. I have just added my signature. I urge you to read it at www.gbdeclaration.org, as well as the accompanying information and frequently asked questions. If you agree, please add your signature.

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