

HEALTH PROMOTION AND MAINTENANCE II

ADVOCACY AND THE PHARMACIST: VALUING PUBLIC CREATIONS AND CREATING PUBLIC VALUE

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Learning Objectives

1. Assess the value of advocacy to the U.S. founding documents and their philosophical underpinnings.
2. Develop a personal position on whether health is a right.
3. Evaluate personal positions on public policy issues for pursuing happiness.
4. Assess national pharmacy organizations' advocacy efforts in their use of science and research as their evidence base.
5. Design active advocacy approaches for patients and communities that increase the value of the pharmacist to the public.

Valuing Public Creations

The fragile nature of the U.S. form of government and society is often underappreciated. It is the intent of this chapter that you, through advocacy roles, will recommit to ensuring justice for yourself and to the concepts of social justice for others so that we all may pursue life, liberty, and happiness. Political action and advocacy are not areas of public policy that receive a great deal of rigorous analysis. This chapter will not prove that one way of demonstrating civic duty is better than another; its aim is to remind you of the public creations we value in America and the expectations for advocacy they establish. These creations are dependent on individual deliberation and action to remain strong and capable of sustaining human rights.

This chapter reviews the documents and social constructs that define the government and commercial dynamics of the United States together with the role of the individual, either as pharmacist or private citizen, in sustaining them. The chapter presents, at a basic level, the philosophical tenets behind these documents and constructs and the dangers to them from individual complacency. Finally, the chapter reviews the individual and professional actions that bring value to communities, patients, and our nation.

What Are the Public Creations We Value as Individuals?

America is a unique amalgamation of democracy and free market capitalism. Our combination of governing and market philosophies is reflected in the value we place on these philosophies and the documents and constructs that express them.

The Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence establishes our nation as an independent entity; this entity came to be called the United States of America. The Declaration we celebrate was created through a long and laborious consensus process. This consensus was not quick in coming, and the discussions leading to the final version were fraught with tension and acrimony as individuals attempted to put into words why the American colonies should be free from the British Crown and what a free America would represent to its citizens and the world. The statements in our Declaration echo the thoughts of philosophers from centuries and millennia before the American colonies sought independence. With the writing of the Declaration of Independence, the dreams of philosophers came true with the inclusion of the document's most salient phrase, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." America's Declaration of Independence continues to provide substantial guidance for our nation, even with its identified and debated aspects of what freedoms it expresses and for whom those freedoms were intended. Even with its identified shortcomings, the Declaration of Independence continues to serve our nation and others as a description of public action necessary in light of inequities and injustices inflicted by one government on another. It also offers the potential for social improvement through the more complete enjoyment of an individual's inalienable rights when these injustices are removed.

The U.S. Constitution

In establishing our form of representative democracy, the U.S. Constitution addresses the need to govern the

Abbreviations in This Chapter

AHRQ	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
CDTM	Collaborative drug therapy management
FDAA	U.S. Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007
JCPP	Joint Commission on Pharmacy Practice
NIH	National Institutes of Health
PBRN	Practice-based research network

individual as well as the entire nation. The three branches of our federal government (i.e., the legislative, executive, and judiciary) are a clear indication that there was tension between the needs of the individual and the needs of society as a whole or, rather, as a nation. This tension is recognized and addressed through the Constitution's establishment of a bicameral legislative structure. The House of Representatives is just that, a legislative body representing the needs of the individual through legislative districts within states. The Senate represents the larger interest of the states. The executive branch administers the intent of Congress through federal agencies and rulemaking. It also represents the interest of the nation as a whole. The judicial branch was established to protect the rights of individuals established in the Constitution's amendments, including its first 10, the Bill of Rights.

Free Market Capitalism

Our market structure is equally unique and represents the thoughts of Adam Smith and others from the same era as the philosophers who influenced the writers of America's governing documents. The desire to recognize, yet balance, the somewhat competing concepts of individualism and community in our government is also an essential element of the economic system of the United States. The need for balance creates the expectation of involvement by U.S. citizens to ensure that the needs of neither the individual nor the community are adversely affected by the other.

Colonial America's ready assimilation of free market capitalism created substantial gains for Great Britain. However, the use of punitive trade policies by Great Britain proved to be the downfall of its colonial power in America. It is clear in Smith's writings (e.g., *The Wealth of Nations*) that he considered capitalistic market structures superior and that they improved the standing of the producer. But, in true American style, the needs of the individual consumer in a capitalistic market system would remain proportionally greater than those of the producer. Thus, America's unique form of free market capitalism also recognizes the need to balance any undue commercial influence of any organizational entity over the individual. The federal government's role in ensuring this balance is artistically represented in a sculpture outside the Federal Trade Commission in Washington, DC, that portrays a human figure (regulation) aggressively reining in what appears to

be a runaway horse (free market). Advocacy to ensure this balance within our free market economic system is found within organizations that represent the interest of individual consumers such as the National Consumers League and the Consumers Union.

The way in which the United States goes about its business of government and trade requires significant oversight by its citizens to maintain the rather precarious balance between the needs of the individual and those of the community at large. The U.S. government and economic system were developed with the assumption that American society would be amenable to and supportive of the expectations of individual participation in this oversight. Through the statements and assumptions inherent in the documents and systems that describe us as a nation, the U.S. citizen is expected to be an active member of society, engaging in advocacy aimed at maintaining the necessary balance between the individual and the community. Similar assumptions of advocacy, in addition to those as a citizen, can be put forth for the pharmacist.

What Are the Public Creations We Value as Pharmacists?

A pharmacist's career and daily work are directly affected by public creations that influence his or her current and future practice. These creations also state some expected role as an advocate. Regulation of professional practice is a role of state governments. The pharmacist's current scope of practice is established through his or her state's pharmacy practice acts and administered through the state board of pharmacy. The state practice act for pharmacy is a valued public creation with its intent to delineate the scope of practice of the individual while protecting the health of the community. State pharmacy practice acts, as well as acts of other licensed professions, are examples of government action aimed at protecting the health of the public by controlling the influence of the licensed individual on the public.

Future Vision for Pharmacy Practice

The Joint Commission on Pharmacy Practice (JCPP) recently created a "Future Vision for Pharmacy Practice" (Vision) that enumerates the expected knowledge, skills, and abilities of a pharmacist practicing in 2015. This consensus document is already influencing academic pharmacy as well as professional pharmacy associations. The Vision explicitly establishes the expectation of advocacy by the pharmacist on behalf of patients and the profession in the section titled "How Pharmacy Practice Will Benefit Society." The five bullet points listed under this section of the Vision cannot be accomplished without advocacy by the pharmacist.

The Oath of the Pharmacist

Taking the Oath of the Pharmacist allows pharmacists to state their personal commitment to their patients and society. The oath includes the statement, "I will embrace and advocate change in the profession of pharmacy that improves patient care." This commitment requires pharmacists to remain current in the practice of pharmacy and in the policy developments that affect both pharmacists and their patients and create increased value to society through pharmacists' professional actions.

United Nations Declaration of Universal Human Rights

Creating public value through your professional work is enhanced through international documents. Although health care is not explicitly identified in the list of inalienable rights presented in the Declaration of Independence, it could be argued that health, as a right, is not precluded because it could be assumed as one of the many other rights from which life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are drawn. The United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other documents written by the World Health Organization, explicitly establishes health care as a human right. The UN Declaration uses words very similar to our own Declaration of Independence—life, liberty, and the security of person—to list the inalienable rights of individuals around the world. These international documents provide individuals and their governments with direction and recommendations for human rights recognition and assurance. They also provide the health care professional with a consensus that health care is a right, thereby fortifying pharmacists' efforts to improve the care to which their patients have access and the role their profession plays in providing that care. These international human rights documents are not uncontested, but their presence lends itself to a much stronger ideation of what individuals desire from their governments.

Why Do We Value These Creations?

The U.S. Constitution establishes the form of government that protects our inalienable human rights as listed in the Declaration of Independence and enumerated in Constitutional amendments. As our democracy evolved, Americans struggled with the need to balance the needs of the individual with those of the community. America's unique approach resulted in the establishment of a central government that balances these competing needs and ensures that individual citizens remain free and unfettered to enjoy their rights. This federalist approach to governing accepted the role of the individual in supporting and sustaining government. The American approach to governance and trade reflects the expectation that the citizen will assume the role of advocate to ensure the balance between the needs of the individual and those of the community.

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the public creations we value are fragile. Our unique form of democracy and free market economy depend on the continued involvement and oversight of the individual to sustain the values expressed in our public creations and to improve them when necessary. As citizens of the United States, we have been given much and, therefore, are expected to give much in return. As individuals, we have the opportunity to be advocates. As a health care professional and a pharmacist, there are additional expectations for advocacy. Where these expectations and concepts of advocacy arose and how they can be fulfilled lead us to a discussion of philosophy. The thoughts presented are elementary, but they are intended to provide a context for the reader to better appreciate the uniqueness of the United States. They also remind us of what the rights of the pursuit of happiness and association mean to advocacy and of the dangers of ignoring this social responsibility.

The Pursuit of Happiness

"Action is best, which produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number."

- Francis Hutcheson

The tenets of our democratic form of government are a composite of philosophical thoughts. The concepts of freedom, justice, and morality that led to the creation of our government were openly and demonstratively discussed in the leading universities of Europe in the early 18th century. Philosophers of the period redirected humankind toward an enlightened world where humans were innately moral. Individual happiness was to be gained by actively caring about and for others. The refinement of society through social interaction and open discourse would serve as the catalyst for community improvement and civil advancement.

It is true that events and realities of the 1700s provide ready ammunition for disclaiming the impact of enlightened thought on future events. No one was truly free, and individual worth was not self-determined. Yet writers were daring enough to posit that individuals were good and moral—not the property of another individual but free to consider their place in the world. The United States was not yet conceived, but the relevant discussions and arguments undertaken during the early 18th century influenced a revolutionary approach to the formation of this new type of government.

The recognition of the right to the pursuit of happiness in the Declaration of Independence can be directly attributed to the persistent influence of Thomas Jefferson. Although scholars have reflected on the contradictions between the facts and the popular view of Jefferson, it is clear from his writings that he was able to clearly envision a nation that based its potential for success around the philosophical context of free will and individual freedom. This natural state of man, if left unhindered, would lead to significant social benefits through the ideas and concepts each individual would offer to improve society and the nation as a whole. Jefferson's clear view was that this natural state should not be violated, that it was inalienable, and that it would lead to an improved society and therefore a happy individual and populace.

The Right of Association

"If men are to remain civilized, or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased."

- Alexis de Tocqueville

For de Tocqueville, the participation of individuals in society through collective associations exemplified the concepts of Hutcheson and other members of the Scottish Enlightenment—that mankind was capable of creating a society based on individual freedom and, at the same time, working collectively for the good of all. The Founding Fathers were so committed to these concepts that freedom of speech and the right to assemble peaceably are the first rights described and guaranteed in the Constitution. America's continued expansion of associations echoes much of what de Tocqueville addressed when he spoke of associations increasing together with equality. His hypothesis holds true if we agree that there is much more equality in contemporary

America compared with postrevolutionary America. According to the Urban Institute, in 2006, there were 850,455 public charities, 104,276 public foundations, and 463,714 other types of charitable organizations registered with the Internal Revenue Service.

Participating in Party Politics

Among the many ways of associating, political parties play a significant role for the individual who wants to work collectively to influence a political agenda. Supporting a candidate who reflects your opinions is an excellent way to network and build your professional and personal influence. One way to truly influence the policy platform of a political party is to volunteer to chair party activities at the local precinct level. The chairman has ready access to county and state party leaders. Active engagement at the precinct level brings attention and recognition from residents in the local community and elsewhere. This recognition will provide a tangible way to contribute both professional and personal opinions on party policy development. Political party Web sites contain information and ideas about how to participate at the state level. Participating at the local party level is an ideal way to fulfill social responsibility as a citizen, learn how party politics really work, and build the constituency needed to run for elected office.

The foundation of effective advocacy is relationship development and maintenance. Whether you choose to become an elected official or to influence the development of legislation through elected officials, developing relationships through associations or individual action is the primary strategy to improve pharmacists' value to society. Every elected official is dependent on the support of his or her constituents and regularly provides opportunities to discuss issues of importance with these constituents. Fundraisers, town hall meetings, and neighborhood "coffees" are standard opportunities for constituents to have their views heard by an elected official and to begin the development of a relationship that can lead to their voices being included in legislative developments.

Advocating Through Professional Associations

As the pharmacy profession has gained greater equality in health care delivery, professional associations have expanded. Participation in organizations that represent your professional interest is one way to maintain contemporary issue awareness. Service-oriented pharmacy organizations are guided by their mission to heighten public awareness of health issues. Issues of importance to each organization are usually available on that organization's Web site. Your personal experience, community insights, and worldview can influence the way the profession sees itself in context with other health professionals, patients, communities, and organizations. Many professional pharmacy organizations have an advocacy agenda. When individual members actively provide input to the organization, it ensures that the pharmacy profession reflects a contemporary vision of professional goals and societal need. Without such participation, issues that affect the individual's daily professional life may not become part of national or state organization policies and goals.

What Do We Risk by Not Valuing These Creations?

America's form of government and economic system require citizen oversight and input to maintain its impact on society as well as the fairness and safety of its markets. This dependence on the individual for maintaining the integrity and honesty of our government makes America unique among democracies. These public creations are supported by written documents that enumerate our rights as citizens and the role of the federal government in maintaining these rights. Our economic system is a form of free market capitalism that recognizes the moderating influence of the consumer on production. Our government and economic system are responsive to the rights of the individual, and the individual is responsible to the public. American society is dependent on the active participation of each individual for its continued success. Likewise, our society recognizes the special role health care professionals play in advocating for patients and social improvement. In light of all that goodwill, we must consider what is at risk if we do not value our role in sustaining our government and economic system.

Pursuit of Happiness

Creating and maintaining a democratic form of government is a difficult undertaking; de Tocqueville thought America's unique form of government would be sustainable only because we had always been free. The role of the individual in maintaining our democracy must not be taken for granted. Likewise, there is great danger in taking our advocacy role for granted. Although de Tocqueville admired the ways in which citizens of our early nation emulated the requirements of a "happy," polite society, he also wrote of the inherent dangers if happiness gave way to complacency. The machinery of our society and government requires substantial investment in time and action by individual citizens.

Each year, a Gallup poll shows pharmacists among the most trusted members of our society; however, this trust is underused when the number of pharmacists who are members of the U.S. Congress and state legislatures is considered. There may be greater participation at the local level, but in elected positions at the state and federal levels, it is apparent that those we trust the most seem to serve the least.

Not every pharmacist is able or wants to become an elected official, but it is imperative that pharmacists regularly engage in the social interaction that helps modify and regulate our society and profession. Those not actively engaged are not part of the decision-making process. Paul Starr, a Pulitzer Prize-winning professor of sociology at Princeton, describes how organized medicine developed in America when medical professionals effectively created a public contract establishing their primacy within health professions. This contract continues to affect the scope of pharmacy practice. A similar contract needs to be developed between pharmacists and the public, with significant advocacy ensuring the following elements (as stated in the JCPP Vision):

- Medication therapy is available to all patients;
- Desired patient outcomes are more often achieved;
- Overuse, underuse, and misuse of drugs are minimized;

- Medication-related public health goals are more effectively achieved; and
- Cost-effectiveness of medication therapy is optimized.

The Right of Association

“I am therefore of the opinion that some one social power must always be made to predominate over the others; but I think that liberty is endangered when this power is checked by no obstacles that may retard its course, and force it to moderate its own vehemence.”

- Alexis de Tocqueville

Developing our form of government and society in places that have never enjoyed individual freedom and the pursuit of happiness is extremely difficult. This can be seen in the lack of progress in many of the U.S. democracy-building efforts around the world. De Tocqueville warned of the tyranny of the majority as a negative influence that puts at risk the individual and community balance needed for democratic governments to be successful. The mere whiff of complacency provides the opportunity for tyranny and subservience to insinuate themselves into society and government. The ability of citizens to readily organize in associations reflecting a common goal is essential so that the minority may influence the majority and keep it from acting simply from a majority position.

Minority action is intended to move the majority toward the position of the minority rather than a complete assumption of the minority viewpoint by the majority. This concept of the “tyranny of the majority” is reflected in congressional and state actions. Any U.S. Senator may place a hold on a bill that is of concern to himself/herself or to his/her constituents. This action requires the majority to negotiate with the Senator in a give-and-take process that traditionally leads to a recognition of the minority position, either immediately in the form of legislative amendments or later when the benefits to the minority can better be determined. This check on the majority is played out several times during any session of Congress. State legislatures provide similar checks and balances through processes that determine how legislation is moved through committees and to the full body for consideration. Often, these processes are formal legislative structures, but individual citizens are provided a similar legislative channel through petitions and referenda. An excellent example of this is California, which is readily associated with the ability of citizens to gather signatures to petition the state government.

Free Markets

Adam Smith, the father of modern free market economic thinking, also cautioned the mercantile class on the folly of ignoring the needs of consumers in their transactions. Smith said that capitalistic economies required consumers to be actively engaged in ensuring that producers and governments did not apply strategies that might affect consumers negatively. Smith brought to the attention of the British Crown the folly of punitive trade actions such as tariffs, which did little to hurt producers but that certainly inflamed the consumer.

Free markets require regulation. Consumers must remain vigilant to the health and safety threats created by products manufactured both inside and outside the United States.

We expect the inspection roles of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to keep unsafe products out of consumers’ hands. At the same time, we grow concerned when lack of approval by the FDA limits the availability of new and experimental drugs. As individuals and scientists, it is important to use analytic knowledge and skills to help create policies from a scientific evidence base. A regulatory process based on scientific evidence protects the public health. In recent years, biomedical research, particularly some supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has been subjected to challenges based on politics rather than evidence or science. For example, some in Congress have attempted to limit research grants for certain types of research, such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention interventions; these decisions were based on political ideas of whether the research was appropriate, not on the scientific validity of the research.

Pharmacists could play a greater role in FDA drug approval decisions regarding clinical trial results, including decisions based on clinical trial design. Pharmacists can participate in postmarketing surveillance and can pursue appointments to FDA advisory committees. The pharmacist’s knowledge of science and analysis can play an important role in the development of policies and procedures that benefit society.

This civics lesson reminds us of all we have been given and all we risk losing if we do not give back through active participation in society. The importance of the individual to the sustainability of American society and governance is too often lost in the whirlwind of politics and everyday life. The tenets of our nation are based on the active participation of every individual. If social progress is best accomplished through the socially refining concepts of politeness and interaction, then every individual is obligated to engage on behalf of this progress. The following lines, attributed to Alexander Tytler, express the concept of social responsibility on actionless individuals living in a democracy:

- From bondage to spiritual faith;
- From spiritual faith to great courage;
- From courage to liberty;
- From liberty to abundance;
- From abundance to complacency;
- From complacency to apathy;
- From apathy to dependence;
- From dependence back into bondage.

How Do We Show We Value These Creations?

Creations we value state that individuals have inalienable rights. These rights are protected by our government. Individuals must maintain continuous interaction with the government to maintain inalienable rights and to ensure the government’s actions are appropriate to sustain those rights.

According to Webster’s *11th New Collegiate Dictionary*, the word *politic* comes from the Greek word *polites*, meaning to be a citizen. For our purposes, we can define “politic” as “sagacious in promoting a policy,” and we can define a “political individual” as “a member of the community that helps create wise policy.” Whether you consider a policy wise or not is often a key motivating factor in political participation. An individual member of society with no

health care background may not appreciate the need for the ongoing management of older adults taking multiple drugs. A pharmacist understands the negative consequences of polypharmacy and therefore is moved to advocate on behalf of older adults to improve the prescribing behaviors of health professionals. This thoughtful participation establishes the concepts of an individual's value to society and makes him or her a successful advocate. By being valuable to society and seeking social justice, the individual remains happy.

The opportunities for thoughtful policy-making are endless. They exist at the federal level with Congress and the executive branch; within state, county, and community governments; at the workplace; and within your home. No effort to meet societal needs and expectations is too small to engage in advocacy. The concepts of freedom and social responsibility may be hidden in your decision to participate, but your actions make them apparent. Picking up litter at the beach during a beach sweep, serving meals to the homeless, seeking election to your school board, serving as the president of your homeowners' association, advocating for a bond issue, and working with your member of Congress can reflect a personal interest in the environment, affordable housing, improved education, or politics. The pharmacist, who has enhanced knowledge and skills gained through education and practice, has enhanced expectations to be an advocate. Pharmacy patients require specific advocacy to connect them with programs and services that can build on the outcomes associated with their drugs. Ensuring patient access to affordable drugs may mean helping them determine their eligibility for prescription assistance programs or Medicaid. Knowledge of public health and epidemiology can play a role when patients approach with requests to deal with gastrointestinal symptoms that might be the result of an *E. coli* outbreak. Knowing where to report this information is an advocacy role that protects entire communities.

Awareness vs. Action

Our nation continues to value and depend on the assembly of individuals and communities working toward common goals. Any level of engagement and action can be provided through a host of professional, political, faith-based, or issue-oriented organizations. Professional associations usually have an advocacy or government affairs component. Thoughtful input can affect the policies and platforms of grassroots political party organizations where you live and work. Faith-based organizations welcome participation in program development and implementation sustained by spiritual values. The pharmacist can advocate for those with specific diseases, the disenfranchised poor, the homeless, or others through the activities of issue-oriented organizations. Associations can amplify your voice by collecting like-minded individuals.

Advocacy efforts support the rationale that numbers count when seeking legislative action. It also could be argued that engaged individuals who are able to speak to the issue in personal terms make a greater impression. Consider two aspects of advocacy—awareness and action. Awareness is just that—being aware of an issue that is important to you, your family, your patients, or your community. Awareness advocacy is being familiar with an issue and may include taking an action; however, awareness action is passive, one that is thought through for you. An example of awareness

advocacy is sending a form letter through the advocacy Web page of your professional organization. This activity can be done with little effort or engagement. In fact, you do not even have to know the details of the issue. Someone else has determined how the position on the policy is to be presented. Your response is just one of many.

The U.S. Congress is a changed institution because of the anthrax scares in early 2001. Mail sent to members of Congress is now subjected to an arduous process of decontamination that leaves many letters unreadable. Electronic mail (e-mail) is now the primary form of communication with members of Congress and their staff. Staff may receive hundreds of e-mails per day from their constituents and advocates. Prioritizing these is difficult; therefore, it becomes important for the advocate to stand out from the crowd. This can best be accomplished by establishing a personal relationship with the staff member or member of Congress so that when the inevitable prioritization takes place, your communication is recognized and considered. Hundreds of e-mails from the same organization will go unread; tallied, it is hoped; and possibly ignored. A personal e-mail, even using a template provided by an association, will more likely be read, considered, and acted on favorably.

Action can be considered an active, thoughtful engagement in the politics of an issue. Action advocates take the time to think about what the issue means to them personally, to their patients, or to their community. The intensity of action can be directed at many aspects of political action. For example, responding to a call to send a form letter from a Web site can go from awareness to action advocacy by including specific information in the body of the letter that describes the relevance of the issue to the writer. The more action-oriented you become, the more knowledge you share with others to assist in the development of wise policies. Taking action that reflects your own thoughts and describes consequences is much more valuable to politics and policy development than techniques considered to be awareness. You can learn about advocacy in many ways, but nothing improves a policy discussion or the direction of a political party as much as direct interaction with those directly involved. Never underestimate the impact that direct action by individuals can have on policy-making at any governmental level. The time you take to develop a personal response to an advocacy request potentially identifies you as an issue expert and important resource to the recipient of your actions.

Creating Public Value

Associating with other like-minded individuals provides an opportunity for justice-seeking that can lead to personal happiness. The individual is compelled to participate to sustain the public creations we value. As a health care professional, the pharmacist is further compelled to participate based on professional creations that are valued. Many issues offer continuing advocacy opportunities to the pharmacy professional. These opportunities for advocacy remain relevant to the individual and the profession by increasing the social expectation for the delivery of the JCPP Vision.

Advocating Through Research

Knowledge remains a powerful and valuable commodity. There is a growing need to advocate for patients and community through science. Pharmacists can play a greater role in creating scientific, evidence-based public policy. Comparative effectiveness research is one approach to heightening the role of pharmacists in health care delivery. Comparative effectiveness is most commonly associated with head-to-head comparisons of similar drugs. Finding ways to improve health care quality by comparing practices to find the maximal ability to improve quality is another emerging area of comparative effectiveness research. Comparative effectiveness research requires broad input from a practice community; this can be facilitated through a practice-based research network (PBRN).

Pharmacy organizations, including the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, the American College of Clinical Pharmacy, and the American Pharmacists Association, have publicly stated their support for the development of PBRNs. By comparing practice styles, these networks provide a mechanism to look at how the quality of care can be improved. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) originally established a PBRN program for primary care physicians, but the community-based aspect of pharmacy provides an equally important platform for creating a best-evidence approach for pharmacy practice. With the potential to improve the quality of health care for patients and create a culture of learning within the profession, pharmacists should take every opportunity to advocate for funding and support for PBRNs. Opportunities exist at the professional association level through policy statements and board action that can bring PBRNs into strategic plans and organizational action. Some pharmacy professional associations have foundations that could fund practice-based research aimed at demonstrating the value of the pharmacist to society. Foundation activities are influenced through a board of directors or other oversight structure, thus creating an advocacy opportunity for pharmacists interested in increasing the evidence base of how the profession affects public health.

In translational science and research, it is essential that pharmacy develop the research structure that can bring important health care benefits to patients and communities more quickly and effectively. Funding for the PBRN activities supported at AHRQ is an annual opportunity for advocacy through the federal appropriations process. Because of its connection to improved patient care, comparative effectiveness has been included in legislation addressing the Medicare program. Medicare legislation continues to be a vehicle for increasing AHRQ comparative effectiveness funding. Increasing and improving the current evidence base associated with the value of the pharmacist in managing medication use are essential to gaining payment by Medicare and third-party payers for the provision of valued services. To date, the discussions related to improving Medicare beneficiary health status by improving medication management have been slowed by the lack of rigorous evidence of the role that pharmacists play in this important component of care. Value-driven, self-insured entities in the private sector are reacting to the return on investment associated with patient self-management programs. Although recognition of the value

in the management of medication use by the private sector is important, the recognition comes from cost savings, not from evidence that pharmacists are the appropriate health care professionals to provide that management.

Advocating Through Patient Communication

Communicating the risks and benefits of medication therapy can improve patient adherence, improve outcomes, and reduce adverse events. The American public continues to seek the most complete source of health care information to aid individual and community decision-making. The Internet has brought a vast amount of health-related information to people in various formats that may be extremely useful or completely useless. An annual survey of health trends published by the National Cancer Institute showed that many Americans are growing discontented with the health care information they find on the Internet. Increasingly, they are looking to their health care providers as the source for their health care information. A pharmacist using science- and evidence-based approaches to practice can help people sort through the morass of health care information and determine what is relevant to their personal or collective situation.

Assessing how patients assimilate information on a medication bottle, from MedGuide, or from a Web page provides essential information for improving these modes of communication. Relaying your experience in the form of comments to proposed changes to federally mandated medication communications is an important advocacy role. Volunteering to assist in the development of culturally appropriate medication communications can be a very powerful role for the pharmacist. The experience of a practicing pharmacist in differentiating and appreciating the communication needs and styles of distinctive populations can assist those creating risk avoidance programs for older adults or patients for whom English is a second language. State and local health departments and other government agencies regularly develop this type of public health communication; the value of these communications would be heightened through the pharmacist's insight and knowledge.

Advocating Through Public Comment

Federal agencies are required by law to seek public comment on rules they propose for implementing federal laws. Proposed rules and final rules, completed after agencies consider public comments, are published daily in print and online in the *Federal Register*. The *Federal Register* is free to the public at www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html. Providing comments to proposed rules is one of the easiest and most readily accessible means of influencing federal policy-making. Although the pharmacist can respond to any call for comments on rules prepared by any federal agency, the recommended focus is on the rules published by the agencies collectively administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This includes all the federal public health agencies, many of which can directly affect the practice of pharmacy. Federal public health agencies that regularly seek comment on regulations affecting the pharmacy profession include the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which determines payment for prescription drugs for state Medicaid programs;

the Health Resources and Services Administration, which determines how acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) drug assistance programs are implemented; and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which creates health promotion and disease prevention programs such as immunizations programs.

The FDA will benefit from public comment from pharmacists during the next few years. For example, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007 (FDAA), Public Law 110-85, authorized several new programs for the FDA. Among these is an improved approach to postmarketing risk identification and analysis. The law requires the FDA to work with public, academic, and private entities to develop methods for data collection, analysis, and communication. This provision and many others related to risk mitigation and evaluation provide a role for pharmacists to influence the rules the FDA will propose for implementing the FDAA.

Advocating Through Associations and Coalitions

Individuals advocate to increase their happiness. Professional associations facilitate the opportunity to increase personal happiness by moving issues of relevance from individual practitioners to a higher community-of-professionals level and often to a level that influences public health and public policy. Participation in professional associations is an ideal way to learn more about the profession and to participate in advocacy in the action context described earlier. The amplification of an association's advocacy agenda by your personal influence and relationships increases the relevance of your profession. Your association may work toward societal goals of increased access to quality care and improved health outcomes associated with improved medication management; this increases the relevance of your profession, as does your involvement in issues that directly affect your daily work (e.g., state regulations that determine your scope of practice or your ability to participate in health care programs).

If joining other like-minded individuals in an association magnifies that happiness, then bringing associations together into coalitions creates even greater good. The development of both federal and state policy is influenced by coalitions. A band of associations working together as a coalition to advance a particular collective vision or position holds significant sway in policy debates because of the large number of individuals represented. Coalitions therefore can be very effective; they are regularly created to advance a unified agenda because of the concise, targeted messages they have developed through consensus.

One of the best examples of pharmacy organizations working together is the Alliance for Pharmaceutical Care. This coalition of pharmacy organizations annually exhibits at the National Conference of State Legislatures. The exhibit provides state legislators and their staff the opportunity to participate in pharmacist-provided health screenings, demonstrating how today's pharmacists go beyond the traditional dispensing role to provide quality patient care services that improve health and reduce health care costs. Originally established to advocate for collaborative drug therapy management (CDTM) laws, the Alliance has proved the effectiveness of coalitions: 44 states now have CDTM laws.

Advocating Through Public Health

Health promotion and wellness are prime action advocacy opportunities for pharmacists. The pharmacist's role in public health is now better appreciated by pharmacists and nonpharmacists alike. Substantial individual and community value is created by capitalizing on the trust that the public places in the pharmacy profession and the ability of health professionals to collect and analyze data to affect a particular health issue.

Public health is one of the least understood policy areas, at least at the federal level. Advocacy organizations have sought funding increases for federal public health agencies for years with limited success. With the exception of the congressional commitment to double the budget of the NIH, no federal public health agency has gained sufficient support to deliver programs and services at a level that meets the needs of our society. Even the value of the NIH budget increase to individual researchers has been questioned. Data from the NIH show that success rates, number of awards, and average grant amount in constant dollars for new investigators continue to decrease. The manner in which federal programs are evaluated for their fiscal impact (referred to as scoring) has never taken into consideration the savings that public health programs can accrue from reduced mortality and morbidity.

The arcane aspects of the federal appropriations process pale in comparison with the public's lack of understanding or appreciation for the value of public health interventions. Safe food, water, air, workplaces, schools, health care facilities, and even swimming pools are evidence of public health in our daily lives. Even the public health community is perplexed by varying definitions of public health, with no one definition as the gold standard. Public health thereby becomes a little bit of everything and not enough of anything. Yet, in the context of human rights, public health requires practitioners and professionals to consider not just individual behavior but also the entirety of environmental and social determinants that affect the individual's choice of health behaviors. As stated by Lynn Freedman, "It means taking full account of the very real differences that shape our lives, while giving full respect to our common humanity." Despite multiple definitions, budget constraints, and limited appreciation, the pharmacist can still play an active role as an advocate for public health, both as a human right and a mechanism for improving health.

Medication use is an integral part of today's health care. The pharmacist's accessibility in the community creates the perfect opportunity to provide strong, evidence-based health promotion and wellness messages to patients.

The role of the pharmacist in public health is being viewed by the wider public health community as more important than ever. The American Public Health Association, in a policy document, describes the role of the pharmacist in public health. This policy document reflects the continued awakening of the public to the importance of medication management, especially with regard to chronic disease. "Through transdisciplinary approaches, it is envisioned that the pharmacist's contribution to the public health workforce, health education, disease prevention and health promotion, public health advocacy, and health quality will aid in achieving optimal public health outcomes."

The American Public Health Association document acknowledges the need to increase public health content in pharmacy education, and it recognizes that academic pharmacy is working to that end. Pharmacy faculty, accreditors, and professional organizations agree that the pharmacist's role in public health needs to be better established and defined. Toward that end, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists has published a statement on the role of the pharmacist in public health. Primary objectives of the statement are to (1) increase awareness of health-system pharmacists' contributions to public health, (2) describe the role of health-system pharmacists in public health planning and promotion, and (3) identify new opportunities for health-system pharmacists' involvement in future public health initiatives.

In 2004, the curricular outcomes for pharmacy education were restructured to include greater public health competencies of graduates. This role recognizes the importance of the pharmacist as a health care team member competent to promote health improvement, wellness, and disease prevention in cooperation with patients, communities, at-risk populations, and other members of an interprofessional team of health care providers. The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education Standards 2007, Standard 12, speaks directly to the expectation that a graduate will be competent to "promote health." The JCPP's Vision includes an expectation that pharmacists "will be responsible for promotion of wellness, health improvement, and disease prevention." A pharmacist's advocacy role is strengthened by changes in the educational and professional expectations of the pharmacist's role in public health.

Currently, pharmacists engage in all types of public health activities that could be bolstered through increased advocacy. Forty-nine states have laws that allow a pharmacist to provide some type of immunization. A broadening of immunization laws and regulations in state scopes of practice would benefit patients by increasing access to immunizations and benefit the public by increasing immunization rates. Increasing the opportunity for pharmacists to provide immunizations would also benefit communities as they strive to meet the Healthy People 2010 objectives.

Pharmacists were integral in implementing a folic acid awareness program that was supported by the March of Dimes and aimed at pregnant women to reduce the risk of infants born with neural tube defects. The inclusion of pharmacists in preparation for natural and man-made disasters and public health threats came about because of pharmacy leaders who actively advocated for involvement in planning and implementation strategies. Maintaining the pharmacist's role in emergency preparedness and other public health policy areas will require continued advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels.

Conclusion

The individual has a responsibility to ensure the continued support of our inalienable rights through advocacy and personal recognition of what these rights mean. We each have a duty to reflect on the value our public documents and processes bring to this nation and to help others value them as well. Rights must be protected and respected. The

pharmacist, as a health care professional, has an additional responsibility to make sure that advocacy is based on science so that our society is improved through best evidence, not the tyranny of the majority. The pharmacist is a trusted member of society. This trust should be used to work for the benefit of others as well as the pharmacist and the profession. Our nation depends on advocacy and participation as an individual and professional.

Annotated Bibliography

1. The Constitution of the United States of America. Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, reprinted 1994.

Every citizen of the United States should be familiar with the U.S. Constitution, which establishes the parameters of our federal government and is essential for the preservation of our society. All individuals should understand what the Constitution and its amendments do and what they mean to society. The Constitution itself is a living document; it is not only the consensus document of members of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, but it also reflects the thoughts expressed in the Articles of Confederation, the original organizing document of the United States and its government. The living nature of the document continues because it can be amended as society changes. The originators expressed their certainty that all Americans would remain committed to the concepts of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness through their actions.

2. Declaration of Independence [document on the Internet]. College Park, MD: The National Archives and Records Administration; c1776. Available at www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/declaration.html. Accessed July 21, 2008.

The Declaration of Independence remains our country's premier statement of what rights cannot be denied all individuals: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This notable document was written by Thomas Jefferson as a member of the Second Continental Congress. The document lists the grievances to which individuals in the British colony of America were being subjected. King George's actions against the colony form many of the explicit rights that would be set forth in the Constitution. The philosophical concepts presented in our Declaration of Independence not only reflect the thinking of eminent colonial Americans but also describe the concepts espoused by the wider philosophy community during the 18th-century enlightenment.

America's Declaration of Independence provides a direct relationship to political action and advocacy. Jefferson's inclusion of the phrase "the pursuit of happiness" directly speaks to the thoughts of the philosopher Francis Hutcheson, who believed that the universal right of freedom provided the individual the opportunity to engage in both the creation of happiness for self, as well as a more altruistic happiness when others were able to enjoy their universal rights. Thus, we have in the Declaration of Independence the establishment of what it means to be free and to be an advocate for the protection of universal and other stated rights for oneself and for others.

3. United Nations [homepage on the Internet]. UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. New York: United Nations; c1998. Available at www.un.org/Overview/rights.html. Accessed July 21, 2008.

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in December 1948. This Declaration appears to be greatly influenced by the statements of inalienable rights established in our own Declaration of Independence. Article 3 of the UN Declaration states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.” The UN Declaration continues to list rights that are provided Americans, either in our Constitution’s Bill of Rights or in our amendments. Such similarities include protection against slavery and torture and the right to equal treatment before the law. The UN Declaration includes both rights explicitly. The rights listed in the UN Declaration form the basis of several other nations’ statements of human rights.

The UN Declaration is not a legally binding document. Its legitimacy comes from the recognition nations have given it when challenging other nations’ misuse of their citizens and their denial of the human rights stated in the UN Declaration. The UN Declaration forms a mainstay in a large number of documents, including the UN Covenants that establish human rights around the world.

4. Mann JM, Gruskin S, Grodin MA, Annas GJ, eds. *Health and Human Rights: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

The connection between human rights and health must be presumed when considering only the U.S. documents that set forth our rights. When the connection is broadened to international documents that set forth human rights, presumption is replaced with reality. Published in 1999 and created from already published articles, this book is essential reading for those interested in gaining a better understanding of the connection between human rights and health. The book’s six sections provide the reader with articles that illustrate the overall aspect of each section. Together, the sections create a clear picture for discussing human rights in public health and how we, as citizens of the planet Earth, have succeeded in protecting those rights or have egregiously erred through ignorance, inappropriate action, or worse—inaction.

5. Levin BL, Hurd PD, Hanson A, eds. *Introduction to Public Health in Pharmacy*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2008.

As Robert McCarthy writes, “This book fills an important void in the library of useful, practical public health texts available to the pharmacist.” The book’s three sections prepare the pharmacist to participate in the world of public health by providing a brief but informative overview of the basic concepts of public health, opportunities for pharmacists and pharmacy services to be integrated into public health, important aspects of the pharmacist’s role, and expectations for a continued and, likely, expanded role. Most importantly, each chapter includes a section titled “Implications for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Practice” with direct connections to the real and theoretical examples presented in the chapter. The book is written by pharmacists with an interest in or involvement with public health. The authors’ experiences bring additional richness to the text and make the examples and case studies contemporary and enriching. The role of the pharmacist as a public health educator, patient advocate, and culturally competent, accessible health care professional creates a substantial benefit to our society, especially if the pharmacist recognizes this benefit.

6. Herman A. *How Scots Invented the Modern World*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2001.

American government is a unique amalgamation of social and economic philosophies. This mixture was brought forth through the discussions of those often referred to as “our

Founding Fathers.” These men were largely influenced by the growing Western European enlightenment that was challenging the long-held philosophical tenets sustained since the time of the Greeks. The author’s approach clearly focuses on the many lines of thought that led to the creation of our modern-day concepts of democracy. Of particular use in this book is Part One, with its easily appreciated presentation of the philosophical thought that drove the 18th-century enlightenment. These philosophical concepts became the very ideas that the creators of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution would later express in these valued public creations.

7. Redman E. *The Dance of Legislation*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001.

The U.S. Congress is a wondrous maze of rules and personal ambitions. This book realistically describes the many pitfalls that await any good idea that may be thought of as worthy of legal status. The book is dated only in the context of the calendar for the contemporary workings of Congress, and it has an important place in policy education. The continued relevance of this book comes from the timeless nature of the federal legislative process. Little has changed in the legislative development, introduction, consideration, passage, or veto process since this process was originally instituted. Although bills are no longer placed in the “hopper,” and much is accomplished through electronic means, the deliberative process that lends itself to the development of the laws of the United States remains. Because a health care issue illustrates the federal legislative process, it may be more interesting reading to health professionals, but the relevance of perseverance, patience, and persistence is a continuing hallmark that serves an advocate well.

8. de Tocqueville A. *Democracy in America*. New York: Bantam, 2000 [1835].

De Tocqueville’s views expressed in this sweeping treatise continue to find relevance for American policy-makers and those interested in politics. His writings incorporate a wide range of observations including patriotism and the public spirit, which he wrote could only be maintained within a country that had never been conquered. Few authors since have had his ability to contrast the emerging democracy in America with the aristocracies of the rest of the world in such a detailed, understandable historical context. De Tocqueville’s writings continue to intrigue readers from every political point of view, and all would like to consider him their spokesperson.

9. Starr P. *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. New York: Basic Books, 1982.

Winner of the 1984 Pulitzer Prize, this book provides one of the most complete descriptions of the development of medical practice in America. The author’s historical completeness does not bog one down, and his text is not overly opinionated. Thus, readers are able to determine for their own benefit what this transformation means to Americans. For the pharmacist, it provides an important context for their professional work that even today creates opportunities and roadblocks because of the entrenched nature of the medical profession. From the profession of medicine separating itself from the practice of pharmacy to the American Medical Association’s 1905 creation of a Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry to establish drug standards, organized medicine structured a health professions hierarchy that devalued the role of pharmacists and their associated “nostrums.” The

pharmacy profession continues this struggle to reclaim a higher rung in medicine's established hierarchy.

10. Wells W. Working with Congress: A Practical Guide for Scientists and Engineers, 2nd ed. Washington, DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1996.

Regardless of education or preparation, everyone thinks there is some special aspect to effective advocacy that they are not told about. All groups believe that their messages require special consideration and editing. This book is aimed at helping scientists and engineers become comfortable with sharing information with members of Congress and their staff. The process will be familiar if you have read other advocacy books. With the constant development of new scientific knowledge, increasing the participation of scientists and engineers could not be more important. The advocacy lesson offered is well articulated and reflective of approaches to advocacy similar to those on the Web page of almost any organization with advocacy as part of its mission or activity. This guide is titled to address scientists and engineers and therefore certainly includes pharmacists, but any advocacy student will find it useful.

