

The Findlay Project

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Many people may be familiar with Findlay, Ohio because of its international oil, tire or software industries. Some people may know Findlay for its expanding, young population or its 180 restaurants within a 30-minute radius. Others may know Findlay because of its recent flooding challenges. However, Findlay is fast becoming known for another major initiative, known as *The Findlay Project*.

History

In 2004, Blanchard Valley Hospital implemented The Center for Medication Therapy Management, providing an innovative Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program for its employees. At the same time, the foundation for The University of Findlay (UF) School of Pharmacy was being laid. By early 2005, Blanchard Valley expanded its MTM services and The University of Findlay launched a School of Pharmacy, eventually gaining both precandidate and candidate status, affording its graduates eligibility for licensure as pharmacists.

In 2006, The Findlay Area Pharmacy Association (FAPA) was launched, with current involvement of over 120 pharmacists, technicians and students from the NW Ohio area. Blanchard Valley Medical Associates, a 19-physician practice, hired a full-time pharmacist to provide medication therapy management, with expansion to include another full-time and part-time pharmacist within one year of its launch. Blanchard Valley Hospital continued to expand MTM services while The UF School of Pharmacy gained momentum.

In 2007, John Miall, the visionary behind the Asheville Project, was a keynote speaker for The University of Findlay's 125th Celebration and the Findlay Area Pharmacy Association. Local businesses and corporations began exploring the use of pharmacists in educational and healthcare initiatives. For example, Rowmark Corporation began offering a Medication Therapy Management program as a benefit to its employees, and the Marathon Corporation began incorporating pharmacy education into their wellness educational initiatives, including international broadcasts of pharmacist-provided educational programs. The UF Radio Station began its broadcast of "Pharmacy Today," a regularly scheduled pharmacy talk-show.

Current Initiatives

Early in 2008, a Graduate Assistant was hired by The University of Findlay School of Pharmacy to begin working with the City of Findlay and local business and pharmacists to implement services similar to the Asheville Project. Through the collaboration of The UF School of Pharmacy, FAPA, Blanchard Valley Hospital and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), proposed Medication Therapy Management benefits and services similarly offered in the Asheville Project are currently being evaluated by the City of Findlay and local corporations. Local physicians are now exploring a collaborative practice model of care utilizing pharmacists.

In April, 2008, The University of Findlay, in partnership with Blanchard Valley Hospital Center for Medication Therapy Management, began offering Wellness and MTM services as part of the benefits package for employees and dependents enrolled in the University's health benefits package. The program has been well received by the faculty and staff at UF. Services are provided on UF's campus in the School of Pharmacy's Medication Therapy Management Center. In May, 2008, the UF School of Pharmacy hosted a Medication Therapy Management Informational Meeting for Insurance Companies, Congressional leaders and healthcare leaders, with John Miall featured as the keynote speaker. Various Ohio pharmacists were featured for their leadership in this area.

As MTM services are beginning to be woven into the framework of Findlay's Healthcare System, medication safety becomes a beneficial outcome. With the hopes of spearheading a national initiative to set patient safety standards for all new healthcare practitioners, The University of Findlay held a Midwest Patient Safety Taskforce Meeting in March 2008, attracting experts in the areas of patient and medication safety from around the Midwest. As part of a proactive initiative, UF has partnered with the Mercy Health System in Toledo to offer a Medication Safety Residency in July, 2008. Patient Safety education is being integrated across the entire School of Pharmacy curriculum, creating a culture where the provision of MTM and Patient Safety are one initiative.

Future

Pharmacists in the Findlay area are in the early stages of creating a new culture for healthcare provision and education. In the near future, pharmacists who practice in Findlay, Ohio may actually experience a city-wide shift for the role of pharmacists, improved health outcomes and a safer healthcare model.