

# Foresight

For professionals in the Health and Wellness Division

Fourth Quarter 2010



## Increase Health Care Access by Reducing Costs

To Dr. John Agwunobi, *Save Money, Live Better is more than a slogan*

**John Agwunobi, MD, MBA, MPH**, became Senior Vice President and President for the Health and Wellness Division at Walmart in September 2007. Dr. Agwunobi's distinguished career includes serving as Assistant Secretary for Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and holding the rank of four-star Admiral in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. Dr. Agwunobi spoke with Foresight recently about the mission and future of the Walmart Health and Wellness Division.



Dr. Agwunobi shares his vision for the future.

### How do you see Walmart's Health and Wellness Division contributing to the greater health care needs of the country?

"Our experience is that people forego getting eye exams or replacing eyewear or contact lenses at the frequency recommended by their doctors because they can't afford it. For the same reason, they may forego getting prescriptions filled or refilled or delay other basic health screenings. Somebody needs to be out there fighting to reduce costs. Walmart decided that strategically it should be in the business of increasing access by reducing costs.

"This idea isn't new. I was watching a taped session of Sam Walton at the last Saturday morning meeting he attended in 1992, in which he was talking about his cancer diagnosis and treatment. He encouraged the Walmart officers in the room to find a way to lower the cost of health care. Our efforts have accelerated rapidly in

recent years because costs are accelerating so dramatically, increasing the demand for relief.

"Walmart's core competencies—a strong supply chain and our size and scale—combined with independently licensed health care providers and a commitment by both to quality describes the engine behind Walmart's overarching strategy. I firmly believe that our health care professionals are as good and committed to providing quality care as are their colleagues practicing in different settings."

### So how does that play out?

"We have to be proponents for quality and cost simultaneously. As our model shows, we can lend our supply chain expertise and

meld it with clinical care provided by licensed clinicians. In our Vision Centers, independently licensed ODs provide the care; in our pharmacies, independently licensed pharmacists provide the care. In each case, Walmart uses its supply chain expertise to lower the cost of products—such as eyeglasses frames or prescription drugs—for the customer. One reason that health insurance premiums are outrageously high is because health care products and services costs are so high.

"Now we are looking at taking our supply chain expertise to other parts of the health care system. Can we add diagnostics or

*Continued on page 2*

## Meet the Walmart H&W Team



Paul Beahm



Jeff Brown



Ron Chomiuk



Volker Heimeshoff



Sandy Kinsey



Mark Larsen



Scott McCall



Marcus Osborne



Sybil Richard

## Inside This Issue

	Opening Doors . . . . .	2
	Synergies . . . . .	3
	Dry Eyes . . . . .	4
	Diabetes Education . . . . .	5
	Contact Lens Care . . . . .	6
	Senior Connections . . . . .	7
	Lifesavers . . . . .	8

## Increase Health Care Access... *Continued from page 1*

expanded services, such as dental and laboratory services? Can we work with hospitals or employers as they offer health benefits?"

### Is the strategy working?

"Yes. Walmart is driving down the cost of some medical expenses. By our calculations, there have been savings of \$3.4 billion with our \$4 generic drug program. Most of our competitors have joined us in reducing the cost of generic drugs, so while it's hard to calculate, we believe that the savings to customers is much greater than what Walmart has done on its own.

"Similarly, a customer can obtain from Walmart a basic package of frames, lenses and lens coating for \$38. We realize that not everyone wants the lowest-priced eyewear, but many people do.

"What I'm most proud of is that the customer has responded to our efforts by giving us more of her business. This business means that Walmart can go back to its suppliers and negotiate lower costs. It's the cycle that discounting was built upon.

"In addition, in October, Humana and Walmart announced the Humana Walmart-Preferred Rx Plan (PDP), a low-cost, stand-alone Medicare Part D prescription drug plan

sponsored by Humana and co-branded with Walmart. With a monthly premium available nationwide of \$14.80 and in-store copays as low as \$2 for Tier 1 generic prescriptions dispensed at Preferred Pharmacies like Walmart, Neighborhood Market and Sam's Club, it is the lowest national Medicare Part D monthly plan premium."



Dr. Agwunobi

### So discounted product pricing drives business to the health care professionals?

"We support the efforts of our independently licensed ODs and pharmacists to build their practices and serve their patients. Internally, we are working on ways to do this better. For example, can Walmart leverage its buying power to purchase retinal cameras or other costly technology, which it can then rent to ODs? On another front, we are developing training to

better support our associates in the Vision Center and Pharmacy areas and to create better connections with professional organizations, such as the American Optometric Association and the American Pharmacists Association.

"Our business model is sometimes criticized. It's on us to try to improve those relations and perceptions. We can do that if we are committed to becoming what I call card-carrying members of the health care community. It's not just about business; holding our commitments to quality and professional relations will allow us to stand as part of the larger health care family." \*

## Opening Avenues of Communication

By Sybil Richard, JD, MHA, RPH  
Vice President, Professional Affairs,  
Health and Wellness Division

Welcome to *Foresight*, a quarterly publication for and about the health care professionals at Walmart and Sam's Club. In this and future issues, you'll read about your colleagues finding successful ways to promote health in the community and grow their businesses. At the Health and Wellness Division, we recognize that providing health care



Sybil Richard

is a business as well as a mission. We believe that you have much to share with each other, and these pages can make that possible.

In addition, we believe that health care professionals have much to share with us at the Health and Wellness Division. Information should flow in both directions, and again, this quarterly publication can work toward that goal.

So please consider this an open avenue of communication. Use this publication to start a conversation with the other health care professionals in your store to see if there are ideas you can use to solidify your reputation as the trusted health care provider in your community. Together, we can grow stronger. \*

# Foresight

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## New Medicare Part D Prescription Plan

The Humana Walmart-Preferred Rx Plan (PDP) offers one low national monthly plan premium of \$14.80—making it the lowest national plan premium in 2011 for a standalone Medicare Part D plan premium offered in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.<sup>1</sup> "One of the primary goals of health care reform is to make health coverage more affordable—and that's what we're doing with the introduction of this low-cost Medicare Part D plan," said **William Fleming**,

PharmD, vice president of Humana Pharmacy Solutions. "People are more likely to take the medications prescribed for them when they can afford those medications. And adhering to prescription drug regimens can enable people to be healthier and prevent future illness." \*

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. 2011 Drug Plan Information—State Fact Sheets under "Spotlights." September 2010. [cms.gov/center/openenrollment.asp](http://cms.gov/center/openenrollment.asp)

# Synergies

## Optometrist and Pharmacist Show Support for Each Other

**Kelly Sutherland**, the pharmacist at the Quakertown, Pa., Walmart, never has to go far to visit her optometrist. She's a patient of **Todd Pierzchala, OD**, the affiliated optometrist in the store. Dr. Pierzchala says the two have become friends as well as colleagues. They have found that their mutual respect for each other also benefits the patient experience. Here's how.

**Convenience:**

Dr. Pierzchala says many patients come to him initially because it's so convenient to visit an optometrist inside a Walmart. He wants to keep that convenience going for them. So he and his staff have posted the pharmacy's hours next to every telephone. "If I write a prescription, I'll tell the patient,



Dr. Pierzchala and pharmacist Kelly Sutherland have great respect for each other.

"This should be available for you at the pharmacy right in the store. It's open until 8 p.m. today." That's important for him, too. Often, the medication he is prescribing will help patients begin to fight an eye infection or give them relief from allergies.

**Immediate help:**

When a customer comes to the pharmacy complaining of pain or other eye-related symptoms, Sutherland often suggests that the symptoms warrant a look from the optometrist. If a pharmacy customer comes into the optometrist's office with a question or complaint, Dr. Pierzchala makes it a priority to work that patient into his schedule as quickly as

possible. Sutherland wants her customers to get appropriate relief quickly, too, and a professional opinion is close at hand.

**Consistent messaging:** "There is a dizzying array of choices in the pharmacy

aisles for eye-related products," says Dr. Pierzchala. So he's planning to develop a short list of his preferred products for the pharmacy staff. Patients are free to choose whatever product they wish for their over-the-counter needs, of course, but should they ask, the staff could say, for example, "Dr. Pierzchala, the professional optometrist here, recommends his patients use OPTI-FREE® RepleniSH® Multi-Purpose Disinfecting Solution to clean their contact lenses." \*



### Vision Center Facts

- ◆ Walmart Vision Centers and Sam's Club Optical Centers serve more than 6 million patients annually at nearly 3,000 locations in 47 states (Rhode Island, Delaware and Oklahoma have no optical departments).
- ◆ As the second leading provider of eyeglasses and contact lenses in the United States, Walmart Vision Centers and Sam's Club Optical Centers sold more than 11 million boxes of contact lenses in 2009.
- ◆ Last year, Walmart Optical Labs produced more than 5 million pairs of eyeglasses. \*

### Pharmacy Facts

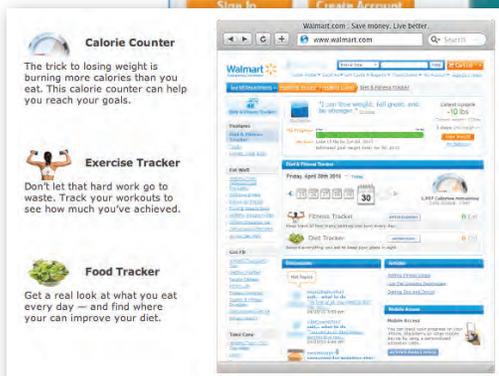
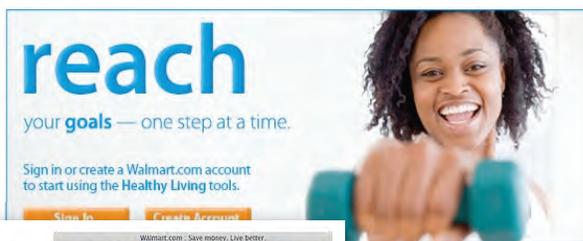
- ◆ The \$4 Prescription Program has saved customers more than \$3 billion at its pharmacies in 49 states.
- ◆ Walmart pharmacies also fill prescriptions for approximately 300 generic medications at \$10 for a 90-day supply, saving customers time and additional money. The offer is available in-store or through free mail delivery to give every American access to low prices, regardless of where they live. \*

# Innovations

## Online Tools at Walmart.com

Walmart.com has introduced several online tools to help customers take steps toward a healthier lifestyle. The free online tools include a calorie counter, an exercise tracker and a food tracker. There's even a customizable fitness calendar featuring advice, inspiration and workout ideas for every fitness level.

These online tools can help anyone put



Online tools help customers develop a healthy lifestyle one step at a time.

together a plan to encourage them to push themselves a little every day. Visit [health.walmart.com](http://health.walmart.com) for more information. \*

Focus on Training

## Tools to Help Associates Grow and Customers Benefit



Renee Ford

By Renee Ford, Senior Manager, Training Project Management Office

In the eight years I've been with Walmart, I've seen a great deal of innovation and movement. However, the Health and Wellness division initiatives are the most impressive yet. I'm excited about the challenges and opportunities facing the training team.

A few years ago, I joined the optical division with the goal of developing training plans to serve as a guided road map for Vision Center associates. Under my leadership, we developed and implemented **Optical Onboarding**, a program designed to integrate new associates into the Vision Center. A second program, called **Best Patient Experience**, was also developed and implemented. The Best Patient Experience training focused on increasing sales and patient loyalty by enhancing the eyewear-shopping experience for patients. Both of these programs were deployed nationally.

As the Pharmacy and Optical divisions became consolidated, a

Health and Wellness Training Project Management Office was established to support the training needs of the division. Our goal in the Training Project Management Office is to define and execute a learning strategy that meets the professional and developmental needs of our senior

leaders as well as our optical and pharmacy associates. Currently, the primary focus is centered around developing training plans for our Market leaders, pharmacy and optical associates.

To support in this critical lift, I am pleased to announce that the department has expanded to include **Andrew Wisner** and **Mark McCrary**, who serve as training project managers.



Mark McCrary



Andrew Wisner

We will continue to develop exciting training solutions to meet the needs of our professionals. I look forward to serving each of you as your advocate for stellar training and development programming. It's an exciting time! \*

## Tackling Meibomian Gland Dysfunction Associated with Dry Eye

Dry eye can be the result of both evaporative and aqueous deficiency. The first is water loss from the exposed ocular surface; the second is a failure of lacrimal secretion. However, a recent study found that 58 percent of the dry eye patients were evaporative and 30.5 percent of the dry eye patients had components of evaporative and aqueous deficiency. In other words, nearly 89 percent of dry eye patients have an evaporative etiology behind their symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

The main cause of evaporative dry eye disease is that the meibomian glands no longer produce adequate meibum (oily or lipid component of the tear film). Several over-the-counter eye drops have tried to mimic this secretion,

often with mineral oil, which historically resulted in blurred vision and required frequent dosing.

However, scientists at Alcon® found a way to overcome the shortcomings with its new SYSTANE® BALANCE Lubricant Eye Drops. Keeping the successful components found in its SYSTANE® ULTRA Lubricant Eye Drops, researchers built on that foundation. The demulcent polyethylene glycol (PEG) and HP-Guar and sorbitol form the cross-linking meshwork that provides a longer contact time of the demulcent on the ocular surface. The



new SYSTANE® BALANCE Lubricant Eye Drops includes mineral oil and anionic phospholipid, a combination Alcon calls the LipiTech™ System. More than 10 years of research has resulted in drops that are specifically designed for dry eye patients associated with

meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD).<sup>2</sup>

For dry eye patients without lipid deficiency, SYSTANE® ULTRA Lubricant Eye Drops would be optimal. SYSTANE® BALANCE Lubricant Eye Drops stabilize the tear film in dry eye patients with lipid deficiency. The LipiTech™ System added to SYSTANE® BALANCE Lubricant Eye Drops restores the lipid deficient layer and re-establishes the natural tear film, providing lipid layer restoration and lasting relief for dry eye patients with MGD. Since the vast majority of dry eye patients are of an evaporative etiology, SYSTANE® BALANCE Lubricant Eye Drops are a welcome product for management of this ocular disease. \*

<sup>1</sup> Tong L, Chaurasia SS, Mehta JS, Beuerman RW. Screening for Meibomian Gland Disease: Its Relation to Dry Eye Subtypes and Symptoms in a Tertiary Referral Clinic in Singapore. *Invest Ophthalmol & Visual Science*. Feb 24, 2010; 51:3449-3454.

<sup>2</sup> Data on file, Alcon Research Ltd.



# Health Focus: Diabetes

## Take Diabetes Education One Step Further

In October, pharmacist **Kris Sosa** got out from behind the pharmacy counter and led a nutritional tour of her Walmart in Parker, Colo. Her primary focus was to show her customers with diabetes how they could make smart purchases. Walking down different aisles, Sosa highlighted healthy food choices, explained how to read nutritional labels, offered advice on skin and foot care and discussed selecting OTC medications wisely. She also took the group over to the Vision Center to talk about the connection between eye health and overall body health, as well as introduce the latest promotions



Kris Sosa leads nutritional tours in the grocery.

and specials available. Sosa's passion for diabetes awareness began when she first worked with diabetic patients in an extensive, formal diabetes program. Around the same time, her nephew developed type 1 diabetes. Knowing that patients can be hesitant to ask for more information, she doesn't wait for questions. She plunges right in, telling patients, "You can have total control! It's so satisfying to me when I can make a suggestion or show these patients how to improve their life or care."

She recognizes that she provides easier and more frequent access to the health care

system for many diabetic patients. Doctors may not have as much time as patients need, or patients are reluctant to ask questions at the time of their appointment.

But her interactions with diabetic patients occur much more regularly. She shares sample meal plans that are customized to the patient's lifestyle or caloric intake and assists with meter training. "It's part of our job to show them how, but in a fast-paced pharmacy setting it can be challenging," she says. Still, she finds the time to make sure patients with diabetes know how to use their meter correctly, which reinforces the importance of monitoring blood glucose. \*

Next issue...  
Health Focus: Obesity



## Patient Education Is Critical

**Maria Fragoulis, OD**, is sometimes the first health care provider to suspect that a patient has undiagnosed diabetes. Dr. Fragoulis says that it is a common occurrence in the three Columbus, Ohio-area Wal-



Dr. Fragoulis

mart stores where she works, so she is considering adding blood glucose testing as part of her comprehensive exam in 2011. Currently, when she sees a patient with whom she suspects diabetes, be-

cause of hemorrhaging or micro aneurysms in the eye, she refers that patient immediately to a primary care provider.

Frequently, Dr. Fragoulis has patients calling to ask her if she can conduct a "diabetic eye exam. These really are comprehensive eye exams, where I take fundus images of their retina and explain the results, but I hear the question often," she says. So she'll begin advertising that as one of the services she offers. She already provides letters to the patient's primary care doctor, and she plans to add optical coherence tomography technology to gain better images of different parts of the eye. These images will help her with patient education and stressing to patients why they

need to be compliant with their medication, dietary and exercise regimens as discussed with their primary care providers.

Dr. Fragoulis is in regular contact with the pharmacists in the stores. She and other health care professionals are exploring holding in-store health fairs, where pharmacy associates can help with simple glucose testing and she can take retinal photos. Already, these professionals respect each other and the

services each can provide to customers and patients. "The \$4 generic prescriptions have been great as a way to save money. It's also very convenient for the patient. If I have to write a prescription, I'll always offer to call it into the pharmacy during our exam so it can be ready for the patient right away." And if pharmacy associates hear a shopper ask about treatment for red eye, they can say that an eye doctor practices right in the store. \*



## Know Diabetes Warning Signs

**N**ovember is Diabetes Awareness Month. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes, affecting about 24 million people—about one-third of whom don't know they have it, according to the American Diabetes Association. Knowing is an important part of the battle in preventing complications such as heart disease and stroke, blindness, kidney disease and more. If caught during the prediabetes stage, individuals can lower their risk of complication.

Those at highest risk are African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans,

the elderly and those with a family history. Here are symptoms and warning signs:

- ◆ Increased appetite after eating (especially when combined with the symptoms below)
- ◆ Unexplained weight loss
- ◆ Dry mouth
- ◆ Frequent urination
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Blurred vision
- ◆ Headaches \*



## Optometrist Helps Patients through the Array of Choices

*Not all contact lens multi-purpose solutions are the same*

Optometrists may be confident that patients will follow their instructions when they leave the office, but how long will they continue to stay loyal to the optometrist's directions? Bad habits can creep in during the time between eye exams, so **Lauren Gump, OD**, of Somersworth, N.H., has a discussion with all of her contact lens patients about the multi-purpose solution they use to clean and disinfect their lenses. It's not a conversation that should be saved just for new wearers. "Talk to your patients about contact lens solution every year because you never know who has decided to switch and change brands," Dr. Gump says.

To be certain that her patients are following her recommendation to use OPTI-FREE® RepleniSH® Multi-Purpose Disinfecting Solution from Alcon®, Dr. Gump explains that she's aware of the many options that exist for lens care solutions. But she makes the recommendation based on clinical research and her own clinical observations that it's the best match for most of her patients. "Not all solutions are the same," she tells her patients. "OPTI-FREE® RepleniSH® MPDS is the best match for your

contact lenses. It is the only one that has TearGlyde® re-conditioning system to provide 14 hours of moist lenses."

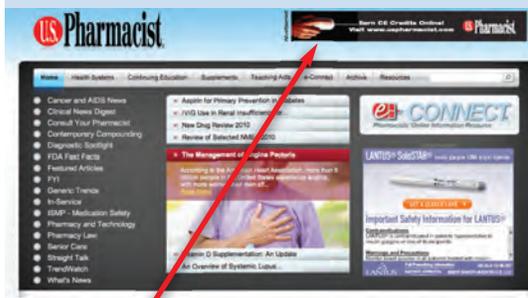
To keep the brand name in mind, she sends new patients home with a starter kit and a coupon for their next purchase. This will help patients remember that they need to look for the specific brand of solution, and not just a green box. Store brand formulations can change, and the preservatives can vary from one product to another, she explains. Alcon does not manufacture any store-brand solutions. Contact lens wearers who have strayed from her lens care solution recommendation often switch back when she reinforces the importance of the product. "Some patients say their lenses didn't feel as good or weren't as comfortable at the end of the day when they changed to a different product," she says.

Dr. Gump appreciates Alcon's support of her practice located in Walmart, and her collegial relationship with her representative is important to her. Dr. Gump also recommends or prescribes eye drops for dry eye and allergies from Alcon because the products come from a company she trusts, and she knows that the prescriptions will work well for her patients. \*



## Free Contact Lens Care CE for Pharmacists

One hour of continuing education to enhance pharmacists' knowledge of contact lenses and contact lens care systems is available online, at no cost, through [uspharmacist.com](http://uspharmacist.com). The course, titled *The Role of the Pharmacist in Educating and*



Free online CE is available at [uspharmacist.com](http://uspharmacist.com).

***Counseling Patients on Contact Lens Care***, was developed by an optometrist for pharmacists. It will help pharmacists and pharmacy technicians discuss the importance of good contact lens care and identify the potential complications and incompatibilities associated with contact lens care systems, including differences between branded and generic solutions, as well as provide an overview of contact lenses. The program also includes strategies on educating and counseling contact lens-wearing customers. This web program is available through September 2011. \*

## What Is Visual Fatigue?

Headaches, neck and back pain could be caused by visual fatigue syndrome (VFS), which occurs when most of your day is spent focusing on objects in the one-to-three-foot range. It can be painful and reduce the quality of your work, according to [essilorvisualfatiguesolutions.com](http://essilorvisualfatiguesolutions.com). The



Hours spent staring at computer screens can result in visual fatigue.

site also says that about eight-in-10 people experience VFS, but many do not realize what the problem is and continue to suffer.

When you experience these symptoms, along with tired eyes and eyestrain, it's time to analyze your day-

to-day activities and make improvements. The American Optometric Association (AOA) recommends resting your eyes during long

periods of computer use or close-in focus. Take a 15-minute break for every two hours of continuous use. Every 20 minutes, look into the distance for 20 seconds to help your eyes refocus, the AOA suggests.

It's also important to examine your work environment. Ideally, your computer screen should be 15-20 degrees below eye level and 20-28 inches from your face. Eliminate glare from lights or add a screen filter. Ergonomics matter: use a padded chair, conformed to your body, and rest your feet flat on the floor. Computer glasses can help prevent and ease the discomfort of computer vision syndrome. \*

# Customer Focus: Seniors



Caregivers of Alzheimer's disease patients shift from feeling confident to bewildered quickly. Pharmacist **Shana Hollopeter** sees it all the time in her Middlesboro, Ky., Walmart. "I notice a difference from when they first come in very well dressed," she says. The next time the caregiver returns, Hollopeter says that he or she is often the individual in need of some assistance.

Each year, \$172 billion is spent on Alzheimer's care, but that doesn't include the cost of the approximately 10.9 million unpaid caregivers, most of whom have no background

## Reach out to the Caregiver

in medical care. "If our caregivers were to disappear, the U.S. would be smothered by the costs of what these caregivers do out of love and sheer necessity," she says. Overwhelmed and confused, caregivers come into the pharmacy to pick up medication, and Hollopeter uses the opportunity to educate them. She listens carefully to each situation and follows these three steps with every caregiver.

■ **Create awareness of the helpline.** The National Alzheimer's Association helpline is



Shana Hollopeter

open 24/7 at 1-800-272-3900. This line connects callers with a representative, someone from his or her state association, if available. The Alzheimer's Association can provide information and support and make referrals to local agencies that provide in-home services and specialized information such as legal advice and information regarding Medicaid and Medicare.

■ **Always follow up.** Check in on the caregivers to make sure they're getting needed assistance or to see if they've completed certain tasks mentioned during a previous discussion. The physical and mental strain from caring for an Alzheimer's patient often can leave the caregiver forgetful.

■ **Discuss the patient's medication.** Alzheimer's patients may be taking multiple prescriptions and over-the-counter medications on a regular basis. Discuss the chances of drug interaction and the importance of following instructions carefully.

Hollopeter, who holds a dual degree in pharmacy and interdisciplinary geriatrics-gerontology, plans to become a board-certified geriatric pharmacist over the next few years.

She hopes that with a little education, she can make a difference in the lives of these caregivers and their patients. \*



## Flu Facts

Walmart.com features an online flu shot clinic at [flushotusa.walmart.com](http://flushotusa.walmart.com). Users can enter their ZIP code and a range of dates to find out locations and hours of flu shot clinics. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control recommends flu shots for people over 50 years of age, as well as children between 6 months and 18 years old, those with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, residents of nursing homes, caregivers of anyone in these categories and health care professionals. Anyone who wants to reduce the risk of becoming ill with influenza or of transmitting it to others should get a flu shot. \*



## Slow Down and Speak Up

During the 15 years that **Cynthia Drenth, OD**, has been the optometrist at a Fairlawn, Ohio, Walmart, her practice has grown—in large part because aging patients appreciate and trust her. "Doctors can be so busy in their practices that they may not take the time to adjust their timing when an older patient comes in. The result is confusion on the patient's part, and doctors get frustrated if they have to explain things repeatedly," she says. So she makes a point of slowing down her pace.



Dr. Drenth

"I slow down, and I talk a little louder. I take the time to address their concerns about cataracts or dry eyes or other conditions," she says. For example, dry eyes can affect patients' vision, and Dr. Drenth recommends lubricant eye drops, along with nutritional changes such as adding flaxseed and fish oil supplements to their diets. "These patients are so appreciative of anything new that will make their eyes feel better," she says.

Caregivers in the community used to want to take their elderly relations to ophthalmologists for primary eye care, but they find her and the Walmart location is so accessible and provides such a good value. "The caregivers in the community, especially those from the surrounding retirement homes, know I've taken good care of other people and feel comfortable bringing their elderly charges here," she says. \*

## The Pharmacy Connection

Dr. Cynthia Drenth and the pharmacist in her store have gotten to know each other well over the years. The pharmacist feels confident telling pharmacy customers that there's a qualified, professional optometrist on site when those customers have questions or eye emergencies. "I have a lot of walk-in patients who come straight from the pharmacy," she says. And when patients leave her optometric exam room with a prescription in hand, she can tell them with confidence that the medication she has prescribed will be available at the Walmart pharmacy. "The pharmacist knows what I like to prescribe so she keeps those medications in stock. It's better customer service that way." \*





# Lifesavers

## Pharmacist's Training Prompted Quick Action

It was a typical, summer afternoon at the Livermore, Calif., Walmart when a patient informed **Mark A. Buchanan, MSPHarm, RPh**, of an emergency in the pharmacy area. A man who had been sitting on a bench in the waiting area with his oxygen tank had fallen to the ground and was unconscious. Buchanan asked his pharmacy technician to page a code white and to call 911, while he prepared to perform CPR on the unresponsive victim. With just two chest compressions, Buchanan was able to clear the man's airway.



Once the man was actively breathing and in the care of the first aid squad, Buchanan had a moment to recap the situation. Patients in the waiting area were concerned but not bothered by the unexpected wait. And while Walmart staff had responded to the code white page, most weren't sure what to do as they watched his actions. For 10 years before joining Walmart, Buchanan had been a clinical pharmacist in a hospital, where he honed his

Mark Buchanan's emergency training leaves him prepared.

emergency response skills. He was thankful for that training and experience, realizing how critical a quick response can be. "Many associates have said that they wouldn't have done what I did, and they would have just waited for the ambulance," Buchanan says.

As a result, he has begun talking with several store associates about how to handle emergency situations. An emergency can happen anywhere in or near the store, and the better prepared professionals, technicians and associates are, the greater the chance for a good outcome. Make sure everyone on staff knows the store's procedures, and expand the circle of responders who can provide emergency care until the ambulance arrives, he says. ✱

## Sight-Saving Diagnosis: Beyond Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses



**Brad Shaffer, OD**, of Soddy Daisy, Tenn., recently discovered hemorrhaging behind a first-time patient's eye, who mentioned that she was experiencing vision changes. She had been to a retinal specialist nearly two years before. She had called the specialist before coming



Dr. Shaffer

to see Dr. Shaffer, but she couldn't get an appointment for two months. "This is something we need the specialist to see," he told her. As a result of his calm insistence, the specialist scheduled the patient and confirmed what Dr.

Shaffer suspected—wet age-related macular degeneration. Some vision will be saved, but not all of it—the situation had progressed too rapidly. That's why Dr. Shaffer wants his patients educated before something like this happens.

He uses every opportunity as a chance to educate. "Older gentlemen who don't like going to their primary care doctors may come in if they break their eyeglasses because they need them to drive," Dr. Shaffer says. "That opens up the door to their overall health by

looking at the back of their eyes."

In addition, he identifies parts of the exam to patients. After he's finished with his refractive exam, Dr. Shaffer announces that he's moving on to the health part of the exam. He

explains each test and its purpose to help the patient understand the importance.

Dr. Shaffer wouldn't call himself a hero. After all, he's just doing his job. "I did everything I was supposed to do," he says. ✱



## Help When It's Needed

When there's an emergency in the store, everyone teams up. **Debra Bedwell, RN, MSN, FNP-BC**, director of Medcheck Express for Community Health Network, who supervises three clinics located inside Walmart in the Indianapolis, Ind., area, has been part of several of these rapid-response teams recently.

This summer, a Hostess delivery man was on his rounds at the store when he started feeling short of breath. He had cardiac bypass surgery four years prior and immediately called his wife. The two came to Bedwell's clinic where they waited until the ambulance arrived. Bedwell learned later that it was a heart attack, but the patient was in stable condition.

Any time an ambulance arrives at a Walmart, there is a buzz in the store from a mix of concern and curiosity. But those incidents also bring attention to the in-store clinic. "I think the Walmart staff is glad we've been there for these experiences," Bedwell says. She sees it in the way they talk about her clinic. They pass along positive feedback to the customers checking out who see the clinic signage. "It's been good for us to be in Walmart, and I really appreciate that we have developed good relationships with management and staff." ✱



Debra Bedwell