

Commitment
to Care

2006 COMMITMENT TO CARE AWARDS

Pharmacist/Physician Team



Iris Krawchenko and Dr. Richard Tytus

HAMILTON, ONT.

Creating a passport to good health

AN INNOVATIVE, COLLABORATIVE PILOT PROJECT CREATED by a pharmacist and a doctor in Hamilton, Ont., is using the community pharmacist to extend the reach of the physician into the community.

After collaborating for more than 10 years, Iris Krawchenko and Dr. Richard Tytus have developed Passport to Health, a three-way partnership between patient, physician and community pharmacist. Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health, it is being introduced in Hamilton early next year.

"We believe that Passport to Health formalizes existing relationships between physicians and pharmacists; it extends the reach of the family physician and it utilizes the unique specialized cognitive skills of the pharmacist," say Krawchenko and Tytus. Krawchenko, who is the pharmacist manager at Dell Pharmacy in Hamilton and Tytus, an assistant clinical professor at McMaster University, are adamant this collaborative approach to chronic disease is necessary to improve health outcomes and access to health care.

Under the program, a physician or nurse practitioner iden-

tifies a patient at risk of cardiovascular disease and partners with a pharmacist. The patient signs a contract pledging to inform the pharmacist of any medication changes within 48 hours, then meets with the pharmacist to create a medication profile. This list, which is included in a "passport booklet" given to the patient, is updated by the pharmacist based on the clinician's cumulative patient profile at monthly scheduled visits and when medication is changed. The patients must bring their passports to each appointment with their healthcare professional.

At the beginning, a five-year cardiovascular risk assessment is created, while blood pressure, patient weight, waist circumference and other measurements are taken at subsequent pharmacist visits. All data are simultaneously forwarded to the clinician.

A nine-month pilot version of the program has already helped four cardiovascular patients this year and an obesity module is being developed. One of the cardiovascular patients in the pilot, John McBride, said meeting regularly with a pharmacist and physician helped him become more aware of the importance of constant attention. "It has also helped to create a more comfortable relationship with the pharmacist, making it easier to ask questions and discuss medication changes as required," he says.

The passport program isn't the only big initiative from Tytus and Krawchenko. They've also developed a patient-focused DVD entitled, *Hypertension—A Patient's Journey*, which helps patients achieve target blood pressure through education and by emphasizing that lifestyle modification is the cornerstone of therapy. Production of the video involved a comprehensive healthcare team featuring a family physician, pharmacist, physiotherapist, dietitian, mental health worker and cardiologist.

A Commitment to Care judge describes the duo's efforts as "incredible," adding that "this is a program that involves close collaboration between pharmacist and physician while enlisting the patient to participate and take responsibility for looking after his or her health outcomes."

—Frank Armstrong

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Iris Krawchenko and Dr. Richard Tytus
(905) 549-9774 or irisk@dellpharmacy.com

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