

Donna Galvin and the IMPACCT program

Pharmacists are key players in community-based hypertension projects

TO MOST PHARMACISTS, COMMUNITY PHARMACY-BASED RESEARCH IS very new, and yet Donna Galvin from Calgary, AB, has been involved in it for 14 years. Forty years after graduating from the University of Alberta, having practiced both hospital and community pharmacy, Donna has found her niche as a clinical pharmacy consultant.

Donna works for the Calgary Health Region Chronic Disease Management department and acts as pharmacy coordinator for the IMPACCT team. The Integrated Multidisciplinary Pharmacist Acute Care Community Treatment Chronic Disease Management (IMPACCT-CDM) program uses a collaborative team of professionals to identify and treat hypertensive patients in the community. The program currently includes 12 Calgary community pharmacists and involves a broad range of organizations, including medical, nursing, and pharmacy experts from the Calgary Health Region, the Universities of Calgary and Alberta, the Alberta College of Pharmacists, Pharmacists Association of Alberta, and the Calgary Fire Department.

Collaborative programs are nothing new to Donna or to Calgary. Participating in the Calgary Cardiovascular Network, Donna has worked with local leaders to bring the pharmacy perspective to the group's community-based programs. "Pharmacists have a lot to offer to these kinds of programs," she notes. The IMPACCT pharmacists received significant training prior to the launch of the program, including certifications in blood pressure management from the Alberta College of Pharmacists and point-of-care assessment from the local fire department. "The City of Calgary Fire Department initiated blood pressure screening in 1995 and now offers assessments at 32 fire stations. Our pharmacists were impressed with the training they received from the firefighters."

IMPACCT pharmacists, such as Michael LeBoldus and Rachele McKen from Coop Pharmacy Forest Lawn, now offer structured monitoring, education, and counselling to improve blood pressure control and overall health of hypertensive patients. The team approach encourages pharmacists to identify medication-related problems, recommend treatment options and share findings with

other members of the program team. A cross-referral system exists so that patients can be identified by either their physician or pharmacist.

Donna has also participated in the development of the A-CHAMP project, now in its final stages in Airdrie, AB. There, a multidisciplinary team, including trained volunteers and local government officials, has implemented a hypertension screening program for the community's 27,000 residents. She's also collaborating with a large Alberta employer to develop a corporate wellness project to determine pharmacists' impact on improved health outcomes and health care dollars saved.

"It's very gratifying to see pharmacists playing a significant role in these projects," says Donna. "Still, the biggest challenge is getting the funding to make it all happen. We've been fortunate to



Donna Galvin, president of Clinical Pharmacy Specialists, has her blood pressure checked at a Calgary, AB, firehall by Dennis Rabel, Medical Training Officer with the Calgary Fire Department.

have influential physicians and pharmacists champion our involvement." After many years of promoting the value of community pharmacy in the big health care picture, Donna looks forward to the day when pharmacists are properly compensated for their expertise.

Donna is now working to expand the IMPACCT program to include additional pharmacists and hopes to see the concept extended to other chronic diseases such as osteoporosis, diabetes, and asthma. "I'm particularly encouraged by the progress we've made in the

past five years," she reports. "You can't help but be inspired by the success of pharmacists in their expanded roles."

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