Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to see you all here today, taking part in this important business session. I am excited to move into the role of the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy® (NABP®) president and I’m ready to take on the responsibility of leading this amazing Association.

I have been watching my predecessors, so I know that the position of president is not all glamour and that there is much hard work ahead, even though they all made it look so easy. But after serving four years as a member of the Executive Committee and two years as an officer, I am ready to take on the responsibilities of this position. I also know, from watching those that came before me, that the rewards of serving as your president are great. For in this position I have the opportunity to work closely with the outstanding people that make up this Association. I am excited to work with all of you to continue moving this Association forward as we strike new ground in the advancement of pharmacy regulation in the name of protecting public health.

I appreciate the trust you have placed in me to assume this important role. And during my year as president-elect, I studied how Gary has worked with all of you to fulfill his presidential initiatives while taking your needs into account. I also looked to Rich and Oren’s accomplishments before him, so that I could build on and complement all of their strong efforts. Their contributions were huge:

Oren’s efforts to define continuous quality improvement programs to foster error reporting systems review.
Rich’s commitment to developing a community pharmacy accreditation program that defines patient safety and quality of care.
Gary’s determination to set the building blocks for regulators to embrace the Joint Commission on Pharmacy Practitioner’s Future Vision of Pharmacy Practice 2015 in order to elevate the practice of pharmacy.

All of these efforts have one thing in common. They were developed to empower the boards of pharmacy so that they can continue on in their mission to protect patients. For without the continued, strong alliance of the boards of pharmacy working to protect public health, the regulatory safety net guarding patients that NABP members began weaving more than 100 years ago will likely begin to fray.

Empowering the Boards
Increasingly, boards of pharmacy are seeing challenges to everything they do including developing and maintaining vital regulations. As state budgets shrink, so do the resources of our boards of pharmacy. Some of us have even seen the autonomy and decision-making of the boards decreased or removed as states battle mind numbing deficits and eliminate critical services, including some of the traditional roles of the boards of pharmacy.

We now concentrate on achieving more with less. And in our efforts to ensure that the most basic regulatory activities – licensing, inspections, disciplinary activities – can be carried out effectively, it becomes more difficult for us
to put time toward other vitally important efforts. I am talking about our ability to proactively work to maintain and create sensible legislation to support rules and regulations that will protect patients and address new issues that threaten patient safety.

Without the input and oversight of the boards of pharmacy, vital information may not be considered and state decision-makers may only be operating on advice from groups that have interests that are not focused solely on protecting patient health.

NABP wants to offer you more support so that you do not have to make this choice. To that end, my first initiative as president is to provide staff with the support and resources necessary to expand the Government Affairs efforts of the Association so as to assist member boards in reaching out to and responding to the many groups who look to them or seek direction from them. NABP will be available to take a more active role, empowering you as you strive to move issues forward in your states and function as dynamic boards of pharmacy.

This concept is not completely new for NABP. For many years the Association offered its services in writing amicus briefings, providing testimony, and gathering information through surveys for boards who want to find out what their colleagues are doing about a particular issue.

But during my presidency we are going to take this concept and expand it greatly. NABP will become more active in exploring and analyzing the issues that impact the individual boards so that we can provide you with more facts and information about your state and others to bring to your legislators. And recognizing that in many states the boards of pharmacy are prohibited from engaging in such activities, in these instances NABP will be available to present your board’s position to anyone who interacts with your board of pharmacy, including legislators and other government officials.

Now I want to be clear on one thing. NABP will not be taking on any issue without the consent and knowledge of the board of pharmacy in that state and after being invited to do so. NABP is not looking to ride into your territory and dictate what is best for the people in your state. NABP will be your partner in all efforts – there to offer you research, information, advice, and counsel. Each state has its own individual needs when it comes to working with its legislature. NABP respects this and any action we take on a state level will be at your behest.

In order to become the partner that you need, NABP will be dedicating a senior staff person to this responsibility. This person and the entire Government Affairs staff will be working with you to discover what your needs are so that we can create a customized approach for each board of pharmacy. This is not a one-size fits all approach. We will be gathering information about each of your boards, determining your strengths, your challenges, and your needs. Most importantly, we will work with you to find out how active you would like us to be on your behalf.

By providing you with the assistance you require to make your needs heard by your state legislatures, this new partnership with NABP will support you in your mission to protect public health.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this initiative and your ideas on how NABP can support your efforts to move your legislature to enact laws that will benefit patient safety.

**Public-Private Partnerships: NABP and the State Boards of Pharmacy**

As I mentioned before, we, as boards, are all experiencing challenges that make it more difficult to do our jobs. But NABP’s programs and services can often supplement your board’s efforts. For example, in 2009 the Maryland Board of Pharmacy was faced with a new law requiring that wholesale distributors be inspected as a condition of licensure. Not having the staffing resources available to perform all these inspections, Maryland appointed NABP as its designee for inspections, tapping into NABP’s pool of trained surveyors. With some enhancements to the already established Verified-Accredited Wholesale Distributors™ (VAWD™) inspection process, the NABP surveyors were inspecting Maryland wholesale distributors in just a few weeks using a process customized for the Maryland Board.

NABP will be taking a personal approach to providing you with the appropriate information on
the Association’s programs and services. NABP staff will be going on the road, visiting you and Board staff at your office, and interfacing with board members at your board meetings. These visits will help us to learn about your individual needs and challenges and how our existing services can address them. NABP wants to give you the resources you need to remain a vibrant regulatory board with the means to further your efforts in the protection of public health.

NABP Forum

As another means of reintroducing you to NABP programs and services that can support and empower you, NABP will be holding a new type of meeting beginning this September. Called the NABP Interactive Member Forum, this one-day meeting will be open to board of pharmacy members, executive officers, and compliance officers from each board. Those who attend will have the chance to discuss among their colleagues in closed sessions important and timely issues as well as learn about the latest enhancements to NABP programs and services. I am also happy to announce that NABP will be able to provide funding for travel, meals, and accommodations for the participant from each state who is selected by your board to attend the NABP Interactive Member Forum. This funding was vital to the Executive Committee’s decision to create this new meeting, as we felt it was extremely important to facilitate participation by as many member boards as possible.

The target audience of the NABP Forum will rotate triennially. In 2010, the NABP Forum will be open to board members, in 2011, to executive officers, and in 2012, the meeting will be offered for compliance officers to discuss their special needs.

With the advent of the NABP Forum, the fall meeting that traditionally focused on continuing education will no longer be held. While these fall meetings, most recently known as symposia, have offered many benefits, the Executive Committee felt that it was time to create a meeting that was specific to our members so that we could concentrate on the important issues that we face daily.

We hope that the one-day format will enable increased participation because there will be less time away from your office. Also, we hope you will enjoy the excellent networking opportunities, and maybe even find a solution to one of your board’s challenges while you attend.

Call for Committee and Task Force Volunteers

Creating empowerment for the boards of pharmacy cannot be accomplished without your participation. NABP is only as strong as its membership, and over the years you have proven what a force you can be. Every person in this room has an expertise that is vital to the mission of the Association.

Soon, I will be appointing members to the single issue task forces as well as the standing committees. I need your knowledge of the practice of pharmacy and your commitment to the protection of the public for these committees and task forces to be successful in furthering our mission of protecting patients.

I know from personal experience that previous committee and task force members will tell you what a fulfilling experience it is to serve as a volunteer. If you want to help shape the future of NABP, please send a brief letter of interest and a current resume to my attention at the NABP office in Mount Prospect, Illinois. Or, e-mail your letter of interest and resume to me in care of exec-office@nabp.net.

This year promises to be filled with opportunities for you, the member boards, and NABP as we work to revitalize our relationship. In this new era of pharmacy practice and regulation, it is more important than ever to create a strong partnership so that together we can continue to be a powerful force in pharmacy. I am confident that by working together we can achieve great success. I look forward to serving as part of that process, as we work together to protect the public we serve.

Thank you.