Good afternoon. I am very glad to see so many of you here today. It is an exciting time for NABP. So it is fitting that we are in an exciting city like New Orleans. Rich with history, culture, and great food. And of course the music.

This year’s theme, “Boards of Pharmacy and NABP – Marching In Together and Stronger,” was inspired by the second line marching bands that are customary to the social events of the city. These bands march through, uniting crowds in sorrow and celebration.

During this year’s Annual Meeting, as expressed in the theme, we are celebrating the unity of the boards of pharmacy and NABP. Over the past 111 years we have achieved much for the practice of pharmacy by working together to create uniform standards that protect patients across the nation. We can see this in so many of the programs and services that NABP provides: The Electronic Licensure Transfer® (e-LTP®) Program, the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination® (NAPLEX®), the Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination® (MPJE®), CPE Monitor®, NABP PMP InterConnect®, and most recently, the Multistate Pharmacy Inspection Blueprint.

I’m thankful that we have this annual conference to bring us together each year, and that you are such a committed membership. NABP does the important job of keeping us connected throughout the year to facilitate opportunities for us to create standards that are recognized across the states. I think we have all been in those situations where we make promises to get a group of friends together soon and it never happens. Unless you have the one friend who makes it happen. Maybe you are that one friend. I know I am that one friend!

Well – NABP is trying to serve as that spark to help bring all the states together. Facilitating regular meetings so that we don’t drift apart. Ensuring that we stay in touch, not just regionally, but nationally, and even internationally. NABP is always working to stay current and ahead of the curve to keep things dynamic and not stagnant.

In fact, this year we are doing something new. During our officer speeches, we are going to ask you some questions. These aren’t to test your knowledge like during the continuing pharmacy education sessions. These are to gather feedback about your thoughts and opinions. The collective answers of the group will be displayed on screen. Now don’t worry. This is completely anonymous. So please answer honestly.

Now please take out your phones, but remember to leave them on silent. To join the poll, text the code NABP to the five digit number 22333. You will only have to do that once. After that you will simply need to text the letter of your answer to the number 22333 whenever we ask you a poll question.

Standard text messaging rates apply, so it may be free for you, or up to 20 cents on some carriers if you do not have a text messaging plan.
The service we are using is serious about privacy. I cannot see your phone numbers, and you’ll never receive follow-up text messages outside this presentation. There’s only one thing worse than email spam – and that’s text message spam because you have to pay to receive it!

Capitalization doesn’t matter, but spaces do.

Now have you texted NABP to 22333?

OK, let’s try this out with an easy question about NABP Annual Meetings. How many NABP Annual Meetings have you attended?

If this your first Annual Meeting, text the letter “A” to 22333.

If you have been to the Annual Meeting two to four times, text “B.”

Text “C” if you have been to an Annual Meeting five to seven times.

Text “D” if you’ve been to an Annual Meeting eight to 10 times.

And if you’ve been to more than 10 Annual Meetings, text “E” to 22333.

Inspection Blueprint/VPP

As I mentioned, NABP works to keep us connected throughout the year, with the interactive forum series and information in the various mailbags. In the forums we see another great example of this year’s theme. It was through these meetings that the concept of the Multistate Pharmacy Inspection Blueprint was born. The executive officers who attended that meeting requested that NABP convene the states to develop the blueprint as quickly as possible.

Those who attended the Interactive Executive Officer Forum in October expressed overwhelming support for the states to work together through NABP to develop the basis for a core set of inspection standards. Specifically, they wanted to address the variation that exists among inspections of pharmacies that are engaged in compounding, in particular, sterile compounding. The group decided the best way to do this was to convene a workshop of executive officers and compliance officers to develop an inspection blueprint. The intended result was to create a living document that would focus on those areas that the membership believes should be addressed by all states, and also allow for individual states to consider additional areas of need.

The Executive Committee responded and convened a meeting in January covering travel expenses for two representatives from each board of pharmacy. To ensure the best use of the participants’ time, preliminary webinars were held to determine an initial outline of the blueprint with smaller groups of states.

The January meeting truly showed how coming together can make us stronger. The representatives of the 42 boards that participated further refined the draft blueprint, which is intended to serve as core inspection standards and criteria that states may use as a tool in their inspection processes. This blueprint was then distributed to all the boards in February so that they could crosswalk the document against their own inspection forms. The Executive Committee and I thank those boards that participated.

We know that it was a time consuming task. For those of you who have not yet completed crosswalking the documents, we encourage you to continue those efforts. We think once all states submit this document you will see the immense value that it can bring. Similar to how the Survey of Pharmacy Law highlights differences among states’ regulations for licensing, prescribing, and other important topics, this crosswalk will serve as a national survey. It will show what elements are common to all states, and where states differ in their inspections. It will allow NABP to further refine the blueprint to ensure it is relevant to the current regulatory environment. Additionally, this crosswalk can serve as a reference document to help identify where certain elements are covered in each state’s inspection forms.

As I mentioned earlier, the Multistate Pharmacy Inspection Blueprint is intended to be a living document. As the practice of pharmacy continues to evolve, so will this inspection blueprint. The Executive Committee and I have created a governance structure for the inspection blueprint, which consists of a governance body composed of NABP membership. This governance body is vital for ensuring continual and systematic evaluation of the blueprint. Comments and
feedback from the boards of pharmacy are key to guaranteeing that the blueprint is relevant from year to year.

You may have noticed that the name Multistate Pharmacy Inspection Blueprint has a familiar ring to it. This is because we feel strongly that the inspection blueprint needs to operate similarly to our competency assessment programs and be continually updated by a committee made up of our members. And just like the MPJE, we understand that each state also has additional needs and, therefore, the blueprint has the flexibility to overlay additional inspection criteria as pharmacies seek licensure in their state.

NABP will also use the inspection blueprint when surveying pharmacies that apply through the Verified Pharmacy Program™, or VPP™. VPP was developed in 2013 in the wake of the 2012 New England Compounding Center tragedy. Initially, the program was used by many states to complement their existing resources and supplement needs, primarily for nonresident pharmacies.

At this time, over 260 pharmacies have applied to VPP and currently have verified data available for the boards to view. This verified data is provided to the member boards in an effort to further support them in making informed licensure decisions for nonresident pharmacies.

And these 260 profiles are just the start. NABP is also working to build its database with basic pharmacy profiles that contain preliminary data. Now, according to the 2015 Survey of Pharmacy Law, there are 74,500 pharmacies in the United States. So here is another quiz for you. For what percentage of US pharmacies do you think NABP has preliminary data?

If you think the answer is 25%, text “A” to 22333.

Text “B” if you think it is 50%.

If you think the answer is 75%, text “C.”

And if you think the answer is nearly 100%, text “D” to 22333.

If you chose “D,” nearly 100%, you are correct. NABP has gathered basic information for nearly every pharmacy in the US. These preliminary profiles are the basis for what we hope will evolve into a robust database for the boards of pharmacy.

It is not NABP’s goal to exceed its limitations or supersede the inspections of the boards of pharmacy. Rather, NABP wants to assist those states that need assistance, support states with sufficient resources, and most importantly, facilitate the flow of information among the states. As such, the focus of VPP is to gather information appropriate for NABP to collect and provide a central clearinghouse of verified information to the states to use in their licensure decisions, similar to the NABP Clearinghouse for licensure transfer. As the states work to build these processes and the inspection blueprint, NABP will continue to provide training, education, and tools to the states.

PCOA

Another exciting development for NABP was the decision by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) to recognize the Pharmacy Curriculum Outcomes Assessment® (PCOA®) in the new standards for accreditation. As outlined by ACPE in its Standards 2016, all colleges and schools of pharmacy will utilize the PCOA for students at or near the end of the didactic curriculum as one of the assessment measures available to the colleges and schools.

NABP is aware of the reluctance and resistance of some colleges and schools of pharmacy to ACPE’s decision. Some within the academic community are upset with the decision and have misrepresented the PCOA.

Let me share with you the true facts of PCOA:

- The PCOA is a valid assessment tool developed and validated against the same psychometric standards and processes as the NAPLEX, MPJE, the Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Equivalency Examination® (FPGEE®), and the Pharmacist Assessment for Remediation Evaluation® (PARE®)

- NABP estimates that approximately 85% of the colleges and schools we have interacted with support or accept ACPE’s recognition of the PCOA while a much smaller percentage are either ambivalent or opposed.

- Since the introduction of the PCOA in 2008, those
in opposition have had ample time to develop alternatives that ACPE would have considered, but those in opposition did not do so. And, quite honestly, there are few, if any, entities that can actually develop a national, valid assessment tool like NABP.

NABP and ACPE believe that the time for debate has been sufficiently addressed and are moving forward to implement the PCOA. NABP has already begun working with the colleges and schools of pharmacy to ensure a seamless transition to this new requirement in 2016. Last month, NABP staff held its annual forum with the schools and colleges of pharmacy and focused on their needs for meeting this new requirement.

NABP also invited ACPE and the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy to appoint representatives to working committees to ensure that the implementation of the PCOA occurs as efficiently and effectively as possible in tandem with the colleges and schools of pharmacy. Based on input we received from colleges and schools of pharmacy, NABP will be focusing implementation on a number of critical areas such as:

• providing the information desired by the colleges and schools to utilize and interpret PCOA results.

NABP will be providing the PCOA at no cost to all students nearing the completion of their didactic curriculum. Our commitment to provide the PCOA for administration to those students includes the further commitment to not raise the NAPLEX fee to recover the costs for providing the PCOA. NAPLEX fees will only be increased in the future if there is a change in the examination that results in increased costs such as an increase in the time to sit for the NAPLEX and the subsequent increase in fees from the vendor. However, if colleges and schools administer the PCOA to students other than students nearing the completion of their didactic curriculum, the current fee of $75 per student will be applicable to those students.

The careful fiscal management of the Association allows us to make these commitments. The infrastructure to provide the PCOA to all colleges and schools of pharmacy is already in place. It has been operational for seven years and has been administered to a total of 31,000 students. The systems for all aspects of the PCOA are functional, well-tested, validated, and ready for expansion to all colleges and schools of pharmacy. We are confident that the expansion of this program to all of the schools and colleges of pharmacies and testing an estimated 15,000 students per year will be an overwhelming success that provides an important resource for the development of pharmacy education curriculum in the coming years.

Now I have two more questions for you. If you are the voting delegate for your state, you will have noticed an envelope with a station number, two puzzle pieces, and two questions about USP <797> at your seat. There are four stations. You’ll need to find the station where your puzzle pieces belong and work with your colleagues to complete the puzzle. In addition, you will need to answer the two questions about <797> and drop the answer sheet into the box at the puzzle station. You will need to complete both of these activities so that you can be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a Samsung tablet for your board. Each station will have a winner. Please complete the puzzle and submit your answers by the end of the Second Business Session on Monday to be entered in the drawing. Winners will be announced at the Final Business Session during Ed McGinley’s speech.

Before I close, I want to express what an honor it’s been to serve on the Executive Committee over the past eight years. It’s been a pleasure to work with my fellow committee members, and with many other NABP members. The dedication and energy of the membership is amazing and is what makes this Association so successful. It is the music that keeps us marching together.