



Report of the President

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Presented by:

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Friends, it has been the honor of my professional life to serve as your president. My only regret is that its conclusion

comes in this way – without the opportunity to deliver my profound thanks in person.

We find ourselves facing the single largest threat to the public health in a century. Carl Aron tells me that, having endured the Spanish Flu outbreak of his youth, he never thought he would see its like again in his lifetime. Yet, here we are.

The toll – by any and every measure – is enormous. We find ourselves daily contemplating loss, disruption, anxiety . . . of a type and on a scale that most of us could not have imagined.

In such times, I draw comfort from the words of those who are wiser than me. That gives me a lot of choices. Being the nerd that you all know me to be, I have been mindful in recent days of the sage words of that English philosopher, J.R.R. Tolkien. In the first volume of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Frodo Baggins learns from Gandalf that his uncle's ring is a thing of

unspeakable evil, and that its finding has brought about a war that threatens the very survival of Middle Earth. "I wish it need not have happened in my time," Frodo laments. Gandalf replies, "So do I, and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

Each day during this pandemic, we have seen our member boards decide to face the time given us with courage and creativity. Crisis clarifies. It forces us to focus on the most fundamental and important issues. For our Association and its member boards that is, as it ever has been, ensuring the delivery of crucial pharmacy services to patients in a safe, competent way.

As it turns out, our efforts to improve the NABP Electronic Licensure Transfer Program[®] (e-LTP[™]) – already the best of its kind among professional licensing bodies – proved especially timely. When we gathered in Minneapolis, MN, last year, I laid the groundwork for a model that would expedite the licensure transfer process for certain types of requests. I wanted to ensure that, in the spirit of innovation and service,

we could build on the NABP processes already in place and offer some credible alternatives. The primary motivation then, of course, was our Association's awareness of competing – and, in our opinion, less efficient and effective – models for licensure portability used in some other health care professions.

Our members sprang into action. In September 2019, NABP convened the Work Group on the Development of an Interstate Endorsement Credential. Its charge was to develop a credential designed to expedite licensure portability within e-LTP, and to do so in a way that offered choice and flexibility to our member boards. The work group's members – representing 11 jurisdictions – made significant strides. Their thoughtful consideration gave shape to the initiative and showed the path forward.

The work group reviewed steps that could be taken to streamline the application process and discussed potential benefits and risks to patients if certain procedures were eliminated. The members agreed that the issue of a multistate credential is complex and does not permit a one-size-fits-all solution. The work group made four recommendations:

1. NABP should continue to work with states to streamline processes associated with the e-LTP process.
2. NABP should maintain the Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination® (MPJE®), and encourage its use by state boards of pharmacy, as knowledge and understanding of pharmacy law is crucial to safe, competent pharmacy practice.
3. NABP should review MPJE data to determine where knowledge gaps exist with regard to state and federal laws and rules, with a goal of correlating gaps with patient safety issues and concerns.
4. NABP should explore the feasibility of developing a limited pharmacist certification for non-dispensing interstate pharmacist care services that take place outside of a licensed pharmacy.

From that came NABP Passport – a credential that pharmacists could obtain through the e-LTP process. Member boards could be confident that a Passport holder has been thoroughly vetted by NABP and found to be competent, safe, and free of disciplinary history that signals a threat to the public health. Our member boards could (and would, of course) choose if and how to recognize a Passport. Possibilities could include: a pre-determination of eligibility to take the MPJE and acquire full licensure in the recognizing state; a credential allowing non-dispensing interstate practice in a recognizing state; or an alternative to in-state licensure for pharmacists engaged in multi-jurisdictional practice. Certainly, there could be others. But the key is that the Passport would become a trusted, flexible

credential that our member boards could recognize and tailor to their individual needs.

The next phase of Passport development was to be a moderate-scale, proof-of-concept pilot project. But as another English sage, John Lennon, said, “Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.” Along came the coronavirus disease 2019.

As we all well know, the pandemic raised immediate concerns about the ability to continue to deliver crucial pharmacy services to patients without interruption. Many states began authorizing pharmacists and certified technicians licensed in other states to cross over and help shoulder the load. This cooperative effort was nothing new. Recent natural disasters, particularly hurricanes, had seen similar actions. But the nationwide effort needed to deal with the pandemic far outstripped regional hurricane-relief efforts. That posed a challenge – how could our member boards both facilitate nationwide practice comity while still ensuring that public safety was properly protected? The answer was the expedited launch of Passport.

At this writing, 18 member boards are leveraging Passport for pharmacists and certified pharmacy technicians in one of two ways:

1. Recognition of NABP Passport as a designation for temporary practice; or
2. Requiring NABP Passport as a prerequisite for temporary or emergency licensure.

NABP quickly responded to the requests of several thousand pharmacists and certified

technicians, resulting in the issuance of more than 50,000 Passports. Indeed, responding to rapidly emerging needs from some of our member boards, NABP has already expanded the Passport’s availability to include interns and pharmacy businesses.

The process is simplicity itself. First, the licensee submits state-specific requests for an NABP Passport through his or her e-Profile. Next, NABP conducts a screening, including license verification and disciplinary history, on behalf of the boards. Once that is complete, the licensee is notified via email, and the Passport will be posted to their e-Profile. The Passport allows immediate practice in recognizing states.

To be sure, a pandemic was not what any of us had in mind for bringing Passport online. But its rapid, successful deployment has filled a crucial public safety need. Its acceptance by so many of our member boards – as well as its enhancement to meet the needs of those boards – suggests that its utility will far outlast the current crisis. I look forward to Passport’s continued development.

This year also saw our members coming together to create ideas in other fields, as well. Pharmacy regulation remains inconsistent in its treatment of pharmacy technicians. This is certainly not a new issue. But our membership remains committed to forward-looking efforts, as we saw clearly when we gathered in Minneapolis last year. To respond, we convened three task forces on pharmacy technicians: the Overview Task Force on Requirements for Pharmacy Technician Education, Practice Responsibilities, and

Competence Assessment; the Task Force on Requirements for Pharmacy Technician Education; and the Task Force on Pharmacy Technician Competence Assessment. Each were charged to review and make recommendations about the current pharmacy technician regulatory environment.

This holistic look at pharmacy technician issues is not yet complete. The Task Force on Technician Scope of Practice still must be convened. It will consider the work of the three preceding task forces. Afterward, each of the reports will be reviewed and, under the direction of the overview task force, their recommendations will be combined into a final, cohesive report.

Innovative mechanisms to support our member boards in the compounding space continue. In October 2019, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) awarded NABP a special grant that will allow our Association to create a data system for the collection, management, and sharing of information regarding compounding pharmacies in the United States. This grant award is ultimately the result of productive discussions at the previous two Interactive Executive Officer Forums, where member board representatives discussed the challenges and costs of state-by-state data collection and submission systems. NABP will use this

grant to build a system to report interstate compounding information to member boards and to FDA. It will organize needed information and improve accessibility, allowing member boards to make informed, efficient, and risk-based compounding oversight determinations.

To keep these great ideas flowing and, as importantly, actionable, NABP continues to host collaborative, team-based meetings. We learn most – and best – from each other. This fall and winter, we will again hold interactive executive officer and member forums. These forums are a great opportunity for executive officers and members to network, with the advantage of a smaller, informal setting to openly discuss challenges and opportunities. If you have not attended an interactive forum, I encourage you to do so. Attendees consistently rate these meetings among our most beneficial.

As I conclude my tenure as president, I tip my cap to Carmen Catizone. Well done, my friend. It has been my privilege over the years to work with – and learn from – incredible leaders in a broad range of fields. None was your equal. My involvement with NABP has been a master class on strategy, tactics, and leadership from you. When it comes to these things, most of us are playing checkers. You play three-dimensional chess. You would have been

as successful in any field. I; our members past, present, and future; the profession of pharmacy; and the public it is our charge to protect; thank you from the bottom of our hearts for choosing this one.

And when facing a transition of this magnitude, one can only hope that the right successor emerges. Chairman Sue Ksiazek and Past President Jeanne Waggener masterfully led the effort that allowed it to happen. Al Carter has every quality, personal and professional, to ensure the strength and stability of our Association and to take it in new directions. Al, you have my congratulations, my support, and my friendship. Thank you for being the right person at the right time.

As we look forward to the rest of 2020 and beyond, I ask that you give President-elect Tim Fensky the same steadfast support that you have given me. The pandemic has forced us all to take hard looks at our priorities as a profession and as regulators. Lessons we learn will present opportunities to improve what we do to protect the public health, and how we do it. As ever, NABP will lead the charge.

I conclude with my deepest gratitude to the members and staff of the North Carolina Board of Pharmacy, to my wife, Amy, and to my children, Curran and Cailin. Your support, in word and deed, has never wavered. Today is a good day to be a Tar Heel.