



117th NABP Annual Meeting
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Report of the Incoming President

Presented by:

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Over the last year, I have found myself reflecting on NABP and its role in providing support to the boards of pharmacy. Our Association's

vision statement, "Innovating and collaborating today for a safer public health tomorrow," seems especially relevant as I speak to you from a screen rather than at an in-person Annual Meeting. The vision statement was adopted to help NABP keep a forward-thinking mindset in focus, while continuing to provide the same level of quality our members have come to expect from the programs and services the Association offers. Because of that forward-thinking focus, NABP was able to quickly adapt to the realities of the coronavirus diseases 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, as NABP Chairperson Jack W. "Jay" Campbell IV, JD, RPh, highlighted in his speech yesterday.

I have been especially grateful to have had the opportunity to speak to and collaborate with so many peers from all over the country as we work through the once-in-a-lifetime challenges presented by the pandemic. Without a doubt, our work related to the pandemic will have a lasting impact for years to come. Thankfully, it seems that we can finally see the light at the end of this tunnel, and I look forward to the prospect

of actually seeing you in person as NABP president at the district meetings and other NABP events later this year.

One troubling trend I have noticed during the pandemic is how unscrupulous individuals take advantage of any situation to profit without concern for the people they are putting at risk. The proliferation of rogue drug outlets selling fake products marketed as cures or treatments to prevent COVID-19 has been disheartening. These dangers come from websites, social media, and other online markets, and these scams reinforce the importance of efforts that support medication safety in the online environment. Fortunately, NABP has been at the forefront of medication safety and the protection of the drug supply chain from bad actors. To that end, I would like to take a few moments to focus your attention on one such pressing issue: prescription drug importation.

Aimed at lowering prescription drug costs for Americans, the final rule published by Food and Drug Administration, Office of Management and Budget allows states to establish a wholesale prescription drug importation program from Canada effective on November 30, 2020. The rule pushes most of the requirements to the states for implementation and requires states to ensure that the supply chain remains secure. That includes testing imported drug products and determining financial savings, among other things. While we now have a

new administration, since the rule's implementation, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr, and members of the United States Congress of both parties have expressed a continued interest in policies that may decrease the costs of prescription drugs, and it seems likely that these policy efforts will continue to include further implementation of importation pathways. Although NABP understands the desire to decrease the costs of prescription drugs, NABP has expressed concerns with importing prescription drugs from other countries and the challenges that states would face in protecting the global supply chain. While only 41 state boards of pharmacy are responsible for regulating the distribution of prescription drugs, all state boards of pharmacy regulate the practice of pharmacy to ensure patients receive safe and effective prescription drugs. To serve the mission of NABP and our member boards, I am announcing today that my initiative as president of NABP is to provide guidance to states, the federal government, and boards of pharmacy on regulatory oversight processes that will help to mitigate risks in the global supply chain and ensure the safety and integrity of prescription medications that may be imported into the US.

This initiative will have several areas of focus. These include:

- evaluating and educating about the current regulatory environment and the challenges that states will face with regulating importation;

- emphasizing the importance of supply chain integrity throughout the distribution and dispensing process, including the complexities of this global industry and possible threats to the supply chain and US policies on importation; and
- promoting NABP Accreditation as a means of potential partnerships with national and international organizations, to ensure any identified needs are met.

I will also be emphasizing the responsibility the boards of pharmacy and the states have as we work to protect patient health and safety, while overseeing the distribution and dispensing of safe, quality drugs for optimal patient health care.

The issue of drug importation has been a topic of heated debate for many years. It is a complex issue, but we have learned much through these conversations, perhaps most importantly that there is no single, simple answer. Much of the complexity and confusion surrounding the issue of importation seems connected to a few important questions: Why are drug prices so high? Why are medications cheaper in other countries? What is the proper role of government in regulating medication? Like most of you, I have my own thoughts on these questions. However, as a member of NABP, ensuring that changes to the drug supply chain do not threaten patient safety is key.

Indeed, NABP has long been at the forefront of this issue. The Association has encouraged state and federal regulators to study the issue with great caution before placing patients and the prescription drug supply chain at risk. In October 2020, the Association sent a letter to its member boards stating NABP's position on the federal importation rules and reiterating our concerns about the prolific and lucrative counterfeit drug market using importation to gain a stronger foothold in US markets. NABP also remains concerned that encouraging prescription drug importation may embolden rogue online drug sellers to claim authorization to sell patients unapproved, counterfeit, or substandard medications from

sources outside the secure US supply chain.

All these concerns will remain in focus with my initiative. However, the initiative recognizes that the pathway to legalized prescription medication importation has been opened. Our duty is to take whatever action we can to ensure the integrity of the medication distribution supply chain, so that public health can continue to be protected.

One great asset for furthering this goal is NABP's decades of experience as an accreditation organization for distributors. A key component of my initiative is to help NABP examine and establish some means of accreditation, in addition to any other needed measures, to assist states in protecting the drug supply into the US and provide a standardized process to ensure that the products that reach our patients are safe, legitimate, and unadulterated.

To carry out this initiative, I will need your help. As you hear every year, NABP task forces and committees play an essential role in helping all of us review our strategies and find common ground to establish goals that will ultimately further our shared mission. As such, I will be appointing members to task forces and standing committees soon, including a task force on drug importation. We are also launching a new standing committee this year that will perform a periodic, thorough review of the *Model State Pharmacy Act and Model Rules of the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy*. Details about this new committee were provided to the members via the *NABP Bulletin* last month and will be included in an upcoming issue of the monthly newsletter *Innovations*. If you are interested in participating in any of NABP's committees and task forces, please send a brief letter of interest and a current résumé to my attention via the online form or by email to ExecOffice@NABP.pharmacy. The deadline to submit is June 4.

I encourage all of you to consider sharing your expertise by volunteering to serve on the Association's standing committees and task forces. These opportunities

ensure that your voice is part of the discussions that shape the Association's future.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to all of you for everything you do to protect public health. I am acutely aware of the challenges you face as regulators, particularly during a pandemic, and I am in awe of your passion, resilience, and dedication to patient safety.

We are fortunate to be members of NABP, a respected, forward-thinking, international organization that exists to support the efforts of the state boards of pharmacy. And when the going gets tough, such as in 2012, when the states were grappling with increasing compounding oversight as the result of a serious meningitis outbreak, or recently, with the many challenges that states have faced resulting from COVID-19, it is NABP who has brought the state boards together to collaborate and implement solutions. I have come to know so many of you through NABP, and I sincerely value your collaboration and sharing of best practices. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you as NABP president. I am humbled and do not take the responsibility lightly.

Lastly, I would like thank Jack W. "Jay" Campbell IV, JD, RPh, for his tireless efforts in serving as NABP chairman, Timothy D. Fensky, RPh, DPh, FACA, for his strong actions regarding medication assisted treatment while serving as NABP president, and Reginald B. "Reggie" Dilliard, DPh, for serving as treasurer during the last year. It has been a privilege to serve with them and all the members of the Executive Committee.

It has been one year since Lemrey "Al" Carter, PharmD, MS, RPh, was hired as NABP executive director/ secretary, and he has clearly demonstrated over the past year that NABP will continue to thrive under his leadership. Thank you, Al.

Again, thank you for all that you do for NABP and the boards of pharmacy. I look forward to working with all of you over the coming year and beyond.