



119th NABP Annual Meeting
May 10-12, 2023

Report of the Incoming President

Presented by:

Lenora S. Newsome, PD



Good afternoon! I have truly enjoyed meeting so many new colleagues and seeing old friends over the past few days here in Nashville. I hope you have

learned something new, made a new connection, or been inspired by something you heard or saw during the meeting. You, the members of NABP, continue to inspire me, and I am honored to have the opportunity to speak to you as the incoming president of NABP.

While preparing to step into this role at such a crucial and challenging time for our profession, I've asked many of my colleagues what they do to recover and rejuvenate after a difficult situation. That is, I've asked "What is your reset button? How do you heal, both mentally and physically, when you need to?"

I've received many answers. Among the executive committee members, these include spending time with family and pets, and a wide range of activities like making maple syrup, SCUBA diving, raising cattle, hunting trips, riding motorcycles, watching tennis matches, and more. For me, the way I reset is working with my daffodils. For many years, I've enjoyed working with these amazing, versatile flowers.

One of the most interesting things about daffodils is their resiliency. In

fact, daffodils are known for their ability to withstand harsh conditions such as snow and unseasonable cold snaps, something that is very useful for flowers that bloom in spring. Just last year, when Arkansas had an unusually late snowstorm, I was able to witness the impressive sight of bright flowers that appeared to be growing from the snow itself. That image has stuck with me.

Recovering from most hardship requires considering the importance of family, friends, work, and even your hobbies and the joy they bring into your life, especially during the hardest of times.

I think that's true for all of us: everyone needs something or somewhere they can go to recharge, recuperate, and reset. So, as I continue speaking, I ask you to consider: what is your reset button?

Now, it's no secret that pharmacists in many parts of this country have been in a world of hurt over the last few years. Since 2020, most of us have experienced a growing list of responsibilities and increased demand for our services.

Make no mistake, it is a wonderful thing that pharmacists are continuing to advance and receive recognition as full-fledged health care providers. Pharmacist-administered vaccines and testing are a positive change. Nevertheless, the crucible of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused rapid change and placed a great deal of pressure on far too much of the workforce. The results are sobering.

Pharmacists and technicians are burning out at an alarming rate, and turnover is high as the entire pharmacy profession experiences its own version of the so-called Great Resignation. Also alarming is that enrollment in pharmacy programs at schools and colleges across the country has been down. Now, pharmacies are experiencing a shortage of qualified and available pharmacists and technicians to step in and help spread the work around.

These working conditions are too often unsafe for pharmacists, staff, and patients. Overworked employees are more likely to make mistakes, including medication errors, and as members of the boards of pharmacy, we know all too well that mistakes in this profession can have life-altering consequences. Less dire, but still concerning, is the fact that many pharmacies have been forced to cut hours of operation, which can make it harder for patients who rely on them to access medications.

With all these considerations in mind, I am pleased to announce that my initiative as NABP president will be to provide concrete resources to support mental health and well-being for pharmacists and pharmacy staff.

This is an ambitious goal, but one I believe we can aspire to with confidence. Several action items have already been planned for the initiative and will be implemented over the next two years. This begins with task forces that NABP will convene in the coming months.

It's essential that we use these task forces to gather input from those directly impacted and draw from a wide array of pharmacy backgrounds. This approach is imperative to best serve the boards and the pharmacists and technicians we aim to help. To that end, I am asking for your assistance. Each year, NABP's task forces and committees play a key role in helping us understand the current regulatory and pharmacy landscapes. They make detailed and well-informed recommendations that are needed to thoughtfully plan effective strategies to address both new and ongoing issues.

So please, consider sharing your experience and expertise by volunteering to serve on one of NABP's upcoming task forces. There is also a need for volunteer members to serve on standing committees, such as the Law Enforcement and Legislation committee and the committee that reviews the NABP Constitution and Bylaws. Volunteering to serve on a committee or task force is one of the most valuable ways you can share your insights in discussions that will shape NABP's actions and goals for years to come. In addition, these committees and task forces are a unique opportunity to get to

know your fellow NABP members and expand your network of resources. We all share the goal of protecting the public health, and by sharing ideas and collaborating on solutions, we continue to meet this goal.

The timeline for making appointments has been revised this year, and that means today is the last day to volunteer. If you've been thinking about putting your name forward, please do so before the end of the day. I plan to appoint members to this year's task forces and standing committees as soon as I am able, including those addressing the important issue of pharmacist well-being and mental health.

Another key step towards this initiative will be the launch of a new resource page on the NABP website. This page is still under development, but I believe you will find it to be a useful portal through which you can access a variety of other tools and information sources that can help with managing these important issues. NABP and I will be sharing more information about this web page soon.

Finally, the last action item I want to talk about is the inclusion of mental health and well-being considerations into NABP accreditation program standards. I look forward to being able

to share more details on this in the near future.

So, yes, times are difficult, and the challenges are real; yet I look forward to meeting these challenges as I step into the role as your president in the coming year. Your continued support and collaboration will be essential to our success with these goals. I hope you will enjoy the opportunity to collaborate and work together to ensure that the future of this profession remains as vibrant and resilient as ever.

Now, a few minutes ago, I asked you to think about what your personal reset button might be. For me, I think of my daffodils and the next time I can be in my garden, tending to those ever-present beauties. I now ask you to imagine the thing, person, or activity that you identified as your reset button. Think of that reset button for a moment now, and I invite you to just appreciate how blessed and fortunate you are to have these people or hobbies or things in your lives. I hope as you return to your own states and boards of pharmacy to address so many vital issues and concerns that you remember what it is that drives you, and what you can fall back on when you need time to recover.

Thank you, always, for your support.