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Report of the Incoming President

Presented by:

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Good morning, fellow NABP members. It is an honor and a privilege to stand before you today as the incoming president of the National Association of

Boards of Pharmacy. Before I dive into my remarks, I want to thank Lenora for her inspirational leadership and service during her term as president. Thank you, Lenora.

Coming out of the pandemic, both Reggie and Lenora focused on initiatives vital to addressing the changes and challenges we faced as pharmacists and as regulators. Reggie established task forces to examine how we continue improvements that were adapted during the pandemic and remove barriers to those changes.

Lenora called attention to the well-being of pharmacists and pharmacy personnel. As she wisely pointed out in her address, it is difficult to care for patients if we aren't also caring for ourselves. Her focus on living in the moment has been an important reminder, and I wholeheartedly support this focus on mental health and well-being. If our practitioners don't have a solid foundation of health and a safe environment in which to practice, how can they think of the future and the constant challenges it brings?

And focusing on the future of pharmacy is exactly where I plan to

direct our collective efforts in the coming year.

The pandemic and its aftermath have tested our resilience, our adaptability, and our commitment to patients. It also highlighted the vital role pharmacists play in the health care system and our communities. Today's pharmacists are regularly on the front lines in the protection of public health. They provide vaccinations, testing, and medication therapy management, among many other services, to millions of Americans. We have also been innovating and collaborating with other health care professionals and stakeholders to improve access to safe, high-quality pharmacy services.

We are also witnessing the rapid emergence and adoption of new technologies that are transforming the way we practice, learn, and communicate. Artificial intelligence, immersive hardware and software, automation, and smart devices are some of the examples of technology that are enhancing our capabilities, expanding our scope, and creating new possibilities for pharmacy. While there are reasons to be skeptical, we should also acknowledge many of these innovations have the potential to improve patient outcomes, optimize workflows, increase efficiency, and reduce errors.

Every day, we learn about new and exciting developments that are transforming the fields of medicine,

science, and education. Pharmacy is no exception.

However, these technologies also come with challenges and responsibilities. We need to make sure the information regulators and practitioners receive about these technologies is accurate and balanced, emphasizing both potential benefits and potential risks. We need to ensure these advancements are used ethically, legally, and safely, and that they do not compromise the privacy and security of our patients' data and information. We need to update our knowledge and skills to keep pace with the changing demands and expectations of our profession. We need to balance the benefits and risks of technology with the human and personal aspects of pharmacy.

One of the main reasons we should embrace technology in pharmacy is because it can positively impact patient safety and accessibility to health information. Technology can help us prevent, detect, and correct medication errors, which are a major cause of morbidity and mortality in health care. Technology can also help us improve access to health information for our patients, especially those who live in rural or underserved areas, or those who face barriers such as those related to language, literacy, or disability. Technology can enable us to provide more personalized, convenient, and cost-effective care

to our patients and empower them to take more control and responsibility for their own health.

However, we should also be aware of the potential pitfalls and drawbacks of these advancements. For example, devices can sometimes malfunction, fail, or be hacked, which can, in turn, compromise the quality of pharmacy services. Innovations can also lead to new and unexpected ethical, legal, and social issues. For example, there can be issues with ownership, consent, and use of patient data and information.

Additionally, technological advancement may create new challenges for communication, collaboration, and trust between pharmacists and patients, and between pharmacists and other providers. There is also a potential to create new sources of stress, requiring adequate training and recognition in the workplace.

In addition to these challenges that are inherent in adopting new tools and resources, we also need to acknowledge the social hurdles.

These include fear of change, fears about job security, and managing the risk and expenses associated with innovative technology.

With these things in mind, my presidential initiative for 2024-2025 is to provide resources to help boards of pharmacy and pharmacists embrace innovative technologies to improve patient outcomes and workplace safety. Technology is not something to be feared or avoided, but rather something to be explored and utilized for the benefit of our profession and our patients.

In considering this initiative, I explored the use of technology across different industries and professions and found inspiration from an unlikely source: music. A friend of mine at the Frost School of Music, Jeffrey Buchman, has written that it's important not to confuse the idea of "technology" with "innovation."

He writes: "All these types of technology that we're exploring and playing with and utilizing are not in and of themselves innovation, they're just

tools that these wonderful creative minds, whether they be students or the faculty, are now able to employ to further innovation."

With this approach in mind, we will be pursuing this initiative by focusing on innovation in pharmacy and how it can help patients and providers, rather than just looking at new "tools" or tech in the absence of context. We are working on several fronts, some of which are still in development. But I'd like to take some time to talk about one piece that I'm excited about.

That is, I have set in motion the development of NABP's newest service, the Research and Innovation Institute, which will serve as a connection between the boards of pharmacy, regulated entities, and third parties to share, study, and evaluate relevant technologies and digital health concepts and resources. This will help to establish an environment to test new ideas, develop proof of concept projects, and more. My hope is that the data gathered by this innovation center can be freely shared with both NABP members and industry to support informed and effective regulatory decisions.

The institute will be positioned as a part of the NABP Foundation® and will be funded by carefully constructed grants from interested stakeholders.

The next steps involve extensive networking with stakeholders to address barriers to advanced pharmacy practice and digital solutions. This includes connecting with member boards of pharmacy, academia, pharmacists, and other stakeholders, and exploring the potential of adjacent technologies like artificial intelligence and automation. Such collaboration will offer broader regulatory insights.

Additionally, networking with other organizations at industry events will provide valuable perspectives on the evolving landscape of pharmacy practice. For example, NABP's 121st Annual Meeting, themed "Engage! Regulating Technology for New Pharmacy Frontiers," may include sessions related to my initiative, such as discussion on advanced digital practice models and other emerging

concepts. These efforts aim to drive innovation, foster collaboration, and shape the future of pharmacy practice to meet the evolving needs of patients and health care systems.

On another note, as many of you know, NABP holds task force meetings every fall and standing committee meetings throughout the year. Not surprisingly, it is crucial we utilize these task forces and committees to gather input on multiple topics from our members and draw upon a diverse range of pharmacy backgrounds. Therefore, I am reaching out for your support. Each year, NABP's task forces and committees play a pivotal role in helping us grasp the current regulatory and pharmacy landscapes. They provide detailed and well-informed recommendations necessary for carefully planning effective strategies to address both emerging and persistent issues.

If you are interested in volunteering, there is still time to apply, but please note that today is the deadline to apply for the 2024-2025 committees and task forces. The online form can be found on the NABP website. I intend to appoint members to this year's task forces and committees as promptly as possible. Submissions received after today will be considered for the next cycle.

Now, as we approach the end of this speech, I want to share a story with you. Years ago, I had the privilege of working with small hospitals in Belle Glade, Florida, an impoverished area in southern Florida. Because of that experience, I saw how innovative these small health care providers could be, particularly in the way they partnered with pharmacies, pharmacists, hospitals, and third parties to increase access, improve outcomes, and bring quality care, often facilitated with technology.

Recently, I was reminded that doing nothing can be just as harmful as any malicious action. As I think about areas like Belle Glade, I can't imagine not doing something to make those situations better.

That said, as wonderful as technology is, it alone is not enough. Without people who ethically, passionately, and professionally explore and utilize the technologies I mentioned earlier,

they are useless and could even be harmful.

As your incoming NABP president, I strive to connect people with information, and information with people. I will work with our member boards to advance the standards,

policies, and best practices of pharmacy. I will support you and serve you to enhance the quality, safety, and effectiveness of pharmacy services.

I will listen to you and learn from you to address the current and emerging issues and opportunities in pharmacy.

Together, we can shape the future of pharmacy. Together, we can find the balance between technology and humanity.

Thank you for your attention and your support.