OPhA
Oklahoma Pharmacists Association

May 20, 2010

FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN:

Re: OKPharmPAC

As Chairman for the Legislative Committees for the Oklahoma Pharmacists Association, and as co-Chairman for the Legislative Committee of the Oklahoma Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists, I want to thank everyone who has contributed time and financial resources to the Oklahoma PharmPAC over the past year. Your contributions of time and money have not only been used to promote the image of the profession as a valuable member of the healthcare community, such as the effort to enact meaningful rules and regulations for "collaborative medication therapy management, (CMTM)" but also, they have been used to fight against legislative enactments that would adversely impact the profession and further imperil our businesses.

During this past legislative session our lobbyists, Clayton Taylor, Jerrod Shouse and Dr. Phil Woodward, were successful in limiting legislation adverse to pharmacy. They worked very hard, along with Tom Davis, M.D., and others, for legislative approval of Collaborative Medication Therapy Management (CMTM) in rules. CMTM rules, if adopted, would increase patient compliance, improve outcomes and quality of life for the citizens of Oklahoma. Unfortunately, our efforts in regard to CMTM were met with opposition from both the Osteopathic and Allopathic physicians. Additionally, conflicting interpretation of the CMTM language by attorneys from the Governor's office prompted the Board of Pharmacy to withdraw the CMTM rules language this session. However, we had great support from many physicians in the community, and going forward we want to leverage that support, and the additional support that you as fellow pharmacists can provide in making CMTM a recognized health care service in our practice.

Basically, what the whole political process boils down to is that we as pharmacists from all work settings must pull together. In order to counter the lobbying efforts of opposing groups such as, PBM's, BIG PHRMA, physicians and many others, the OKPharmPAC needs your continued financial support. This year, as in years past, your contributions to the OKPharmPAC allows OPhA and OSHP to continue their efforts in promoting our profession; in fighting against those efforts that would have a detrimental impact on the profession and our businesses. Due to the state budget crisis this year and an anticipated state revenue shortfall next fiscal year, our profession faces serious challenges. Medicaid prescription drug reimbursements are on the chopping block. We must be prepared to convince our state legislators that pharmacy is not an optional program, but one that must continue to be properly funded for the health, safety and

well being of Oklahoma citizens. Other issues in which we've been actively engaged include, National Health Care Reform, DME, PBM Transparency and the PBM's push on forcing Oklahomans to use mail order. Next year, will be crucial as we move forward with the implementation of meaningful CMTM. With the support of the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy regarding CMTM, we now must concentrate on gaining legislative support for this very important healthcare consumer issue. To accomplish our goal we will need your financial contributions to the PAC more than ever. Additionally, when asked, we will need your personal grassroots support at the legislature, by the way of physician letter support and personal phone calls.

It is sad, but it's reality that legislative efforts require significant money. That is how we get attention at the legislature. In the absence of some sensational public outcry, it is a reality that politicians will listen to those who bring the most to the table. Unfortunately, influencing a legislator's votes through sizable PAC donations is sometimes interpreted as the shady side of the political process. However, without a strong PAC, pharmacy legislation will simply not get passed, and under current Oklahoma Ethic Commission rules, your voluntary financial contributions to the Oklahoma PharmPAC are the only sources of funding available. In the midst of an election year, we desperately need to re-infuse our PAC funds at this time. Presently, we simply do not have enough money in the PAC fund to mount any kind of an offensive, and if we were to challenge opposing groups, some of which I mentioned earlier, our efforts would prove to be futile.

For a profession that pays as good as ours, the majority of the 3,500 licensed pharmacists in Oklahoma offer no financial support to the OKPharmPAC. Moreover, time devoted to the whole legislative process is nil. In order for you as pharmacist to control your own destiny you must become politically active and get engaged by supporting those candidates who support us. Many of you have ongoing business expenses that are necessary to keep your doors open, and we encourage you to look at contributions to the OKPharmPAC as one of those ongoing expenses and continue to make contributions accordingly. Likewise, those of us who don't own businesses, we too have a non-delegable duty to support our profession.

I am asking that you honor that pledge and encourage others to do so. Please join me in supporting our OKPharmPAC by contributing now! Believe me, our opponents are writing those checks. I hope you will also. You can make a onetime pledge amount or even consider giving a monthly pledge amount on line. Donate on line now at:
http://www.opha.com/GovernmentAffairs/PACDonationForm.aspx

Sincerely,

Wiley L. Williams, D.Ph.; J.D