



# Pharmacy Today

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**Top (L-R):** C.J. Zarecki, prepharmacy student, and Ashley Tocco, student pharmacist, Wayne State University (WSU); volunteer Hala Bazzi, PharmD; Maria Young, BSP Pharm; Tania Begum, student pharmacist, and Janice Hanna, prepharmacy student, WSU. **Middle:** Young at wellness clinic, WSU; Young dispensing at University Pharmacy. **Bottom:** Bazzi and Young with a patient in the counseling room.

# WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

## Making her MTM vision reality

*Maria Young helps patients manage hypertension, improve lifestyles*

Maria Young, BSP Pharm, had a vision for her pharmacy practice. She envisioned a setting in which she could “take MTM [medication therapy management] to the next level,” she recently told *Pharmacy Today*. She wanted her practice to embody what student pharmacists currently learn in pharmacy school.

Carol Bugdalski-Stutrud, BSP Pharm, Assistant Clinical Professor and Director of Community Experiential Education at the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences at Wayne State University in Detroit, also had a vision—for an independent pharmacy on campus that could host influenza clinics and wellness screenings staffed by student pharmacists.

They found their visions were complementary while Young was taking her required continuing pharmacy education courses on campus at the school of pharmacy. Bugdalski-Stutrud asked

Young what she wanted in her practice and mentioned a space on campus that was ideal for a small

pharmacy, housed in a building with a dormitory, cafeteria, and other services.

University Pharmacy opened in 2008 with a small front store offering first aid, cough and cold products, pain medications, and some products for daily needs. A private counseling room is available that provides a space for Young and her students to perform MTM services, immunizations, rapid HIV tests, and overall patient counseling. Outside of University Pharmacy, she also hosts influenza clinics, as well as cholesterol, blood pressure, and glucose screenings for Wayne State’s Wellness Warriors—an initiative that encourages faculty and staff to take control of their health by opting into a wellness program and working with a health and fitness coach on campus.

“This is the happiest I’ve ever been in my whole practice,”

Young said. “It wasn’t until I opened up this pharmacy in 2008 that I was fully content with myself.” She began offering MTM services in 2009. She offers MTM for diabetes, cholesterol, asthma, smoking cessation, and hypertension and is starting to get involved in rapid screening, medication adherence, and drug interaction counseling for patients with HIV.

### MTM for hypertension

In 2009, yet another person with a bright idea came along to further Young’s MTM vision. Benjamin M. Bluml, BSP Pharm, APhA Foundation Vice President for Research, was looking for a candidate site for Project ImPACT: Hypertension. Bluml had heard about the Wellness Warriors at Wayne State. Wayne State’s APhA Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) chapter runs the

### Project ImPACT: Hypertension

Project ImPACT: Hypertension is a collaborative demonstration project involving University Pharmacy, Wayne State University in Detroit, and the APhA Foundation. The project aims to demonstrate that improved patient identification, subsequent persistence, and adherence with hypertension therapy reduce risk and adverse events over time.

Following are main objectives of this project:

- Improve identification of patients with hypertension
- Improve adherence to medication therapy
- Create a value-based hypertension benefit
- Assist patients with hypertension to achieve national treatment goals
- Measure patient satisfaction

Find out more about this project at <http://apha.us/uor9Zp>.



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initial wellness screenings for the university. Bluml thought Wayne State would be a good candidate for Project IMPACT: Hypertension because its faculty and staff were already involved in the Wellness Warriors screenings. He discussed the possibilities with Young and Bugdalski-Stutrud. It took 2 years to get institutional review board approval and get the project up and running, but in early 2011, Project IMPACT: Hypertension began enrolling patients at Wayne State.

The project provides patients who have hypertension with A&D Medical



wireless at-home blood pressure monitors that enable pharmacists to track their blood pressure readings and educate them about lifestyle modifications as well as the importance of medication adherence. Young said, "All diabetic patients get glucometers because their glucose needs to be monitored, but hypertensive patients don't get blood pressure monitors because it's not covered [by insurance]." The project teamed up with Wayne State, which reimburses for counseling services. Young said, "The patients were incentivized well."

In addition to the blood pressure monitor, patients receive an A&D Medical pedometer to help them track their activity level and a \$50 incentive for completing the program. While they are enrolled, patients measure their blood pressure daily and meet personally with Young and a pharmacy student every 4 to 6 weeks for a total of four visits over a 6-month period. The first MTM visit runs about 45 minutes with subsequent visits averaging 15 to 30 minutes each. Young shows patients how to properly use the blood pressure monitor, which has the capability to store all of a patient's blood pressure and pulse readings over the course of the study electronically. Young emphasized that she has a lot of contact with the patients between visits by phone and e-mail. Enrollment has now reached 150 patients.

## Breaking the silence

Young has seen dramatic results from her patients using the portable blood pressure monitor. She said, "We've had a lot of success stories looking at medication adherence. Having a monitor is key to better adherence. Because they couldn't see the problem, they weren't adherent." With their personal monitor, the patients are able to see clearly how high salt intake and smoking affect their blood pressure. Young tells her patients when they have a cigarette, "Take your blood pressure; it's right there." Young can wirelessly download patients' blood pressure readings when they bring the device into the pharmacy. With this capability, Young can better assess how well patients are managing their health.

Lifestyle changes can be dramatic; one of Young's patients lost 40 lb and has kept her weight off, which resulted in a drop in her blood pressure.

Young also solves drug interaction problems for her patients. Many of the patients with hypertension also have cholesterol problems and diabetes, so she also works to educate them on these diseases. She is seeing their cholesterol improve and their glycosylated hemoglobin decrease. Young said, "With the tools we're providing them, they're able to make the changes."

## Recruitment

Young and her student pharmacists use influenza immunization clinics and wellness screenings as opportunities to recruit patients into the Project IMPACT: Hypertension program. While patients are waiting their 10 minutes to ensure that they don't have an adverse reaction to their immunization, student pharmacists screen them for hypertension and diabetes and suggest enrollment in the project, if appropriate.

Students from the APhA-ASP chapter provide the staff power for these screenings and help with MTM for the hypertension project. Young said, "The college of pharmacy students are what motivates me. Seeing the patients and how they respond—I think that's the whole point of providing MTM." She was quick to emphasize that she couldn't continue such an ambitious MTM project without the support of the student pharmacists and that she hopes it makes a big impression on them as well as on the patients. She said, "I hope the majority

of students [I work with] on rotation are able to take this practice with them wherever they go."

## Pharmacy roots

Young graduated from St. John's University College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions in New York. She was working for CVS Caremark when it bought out Arbor Drugs in Michigan; she then relocated to the Detroit area. Young worked in chain pharmacy for 12 years before striking out on her own.

Before opening her own pharmacy and offering MTM services, Young felt that her other positions were "just a job." Of her current position as pharmacist/owner, Young said, "I love what I do today. There [are] a lot of challenges; there's a lot of noise in the background, but I believe there's a vision for pharmacy and this is it. It's got to start with something."

—Carli Richard

## Hypertension targeted in Million Hearts campaign

In September 2011, federal health leaders and key health care groups, including APhA, launched a 5-year effort to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes. Million Hearts seeks to empower Americans to make healthy choices, such as stopping smoking and reducing sodium intake, and to improve care for those citizens who need it through the ABCS:

- Aspirin for people at high risk
- Blood pressure control
- Cholesterol control
- Smoking cessation

Numerous federal agencies are involved in the campaign, providing staff as well as grants and other funding for Million Hearts. CDC announced a \$2 million Pharmacy Outreach Project that will enroll pharmacists to provide additional advice and support to patients diagnosed with high blood pressure. CMS will award \$85 million over 5 years to 10 states to encourage Medicaid beneficiaries to participate in chronic disease prevention programs and take active steps to improve their health.

Learn more about Million Hearts at <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov>.