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In this issue, we continue to share with you the expertise and dedication of the clinical consultant pharmacists on our team. We turn our spotlight on Emeka Ume, who works in the Niagara area. He has expanded his pharmaceutical care through his volunteer work in Haiti, a country overwhelmed by health care challenges. Emeka shows the same dedication to helping people here in homes in the Niagara region.

We’re profiling the differences between retirement and long-term care homes as well as telling you about a new program launched by the government enabling people in the general community to get medication reviews.

I hope you find our newsletter interesting and useful. I hope too, that it offers you some insight into the practice and benefits of pharmacy.

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Physically, retirement and long-term care homes can look different. A retirement home may be similar to an apartment while a long-term care home generally has a physical structure to accommodate more complex care needs – for example, nursing stations and wide hallways for wheelchairs.

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At Medical Pharmacies, we provide retirement and long-term care homes with the same service programs. We dispense medications in the same way for both types of homes, packaging them to ensure they can be given to residents easily and error-free. Our clinical consultant pharmacists specialize in pharmacy care for seniors and often have advanced training in geriatrics. They focus on helping doctors make the best prescribing choices so residents get the most from their drug therapies. Because, wherever you live, you deserve the most effective pharmaceutical care possible.

Medical Pharmacies is dedicated to supporting the safety, well-being and quality of life of the residents in each home we service.
Making a Difference in Haiti

An hour and a half away from Florida by air, Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. 54 per cent of its people live in “abject poverty.” About 40 per cent of the population has no access to family health care. Children die from diseases like pneumonia, malnutrition, meningitis, malaria and parasites. The average Haitian only lives to 54.

A grim portrait, but people like Emeka Ume bring hope. A doctor of pharmacy and one of Medical Pharmacies’ team of clinical consultant pharmacists, he works in the Niagara region helping doctors make prescribing choices, identifying and resolving potential medication-related problems and helping residents stay with their drug therapies.

For the past two years Emeka has traveled with “Mission to Haiti” to provide pharmaceutical care to the poor in Haiti – new moms, seniors and children. The need is huge and seems to be unquenchable.

“Sometimes, I think not of the people who received our services but of those who stood in line for hours and had to go home disappointed because we were unable to see everybody,” Emeka says.

Emeka has been making a difference with Medical Pharmacies over the past decade. He also shares his knowledge and experience through professional pharmacist associations, researching and publishing, and with up and coming pharmacists as teaching associate at the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Pharmacy.

If you would like more information on Emeka’s Mission to Haiti visit the website www.mthcanada.org.

PHARMACY CARE

MedsCheck – Getting the most from your medications.

Residents in long term care homes benefit from the pharmacist working with the care teams and routinely reviewing their medications. On August 1st of this year, medication reviews by a pharmacist were made available through the Ontario Drug Benefit Program to everyone in Ontario, except residents of nursing homes and homes for the aged. The new MedsCheck program is an annual one-on-one review of medications offered through your pharmacy. Your pharmacist may provide this service if you are on three or more medications. It’s available once a year at no cost to you as the government pays the pharmacy directly for providing this service. If you or a family member would like more information on the MedsCheck program, or to set up an appointment, contact your pharmacist at Medical Pharmacy.

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It’s this sort of passion for direct patient care that motivates Emeka. He has made it a point in his practice to foster the relationship between himself as the clinical consultant pharmacist and the resident in a long term care home. In his work with physicians and nursing staff, his passion is also seen in his focus on medications for treating infections and brain function; two types of drugs commonly prescribed to older people. He has earned a certificate in Herbal Medicine, stemming from his desire to know how natural health products might affect people and interact with their other medications.

A typical day for Emeka finds him at a nursing station in a home in the Niagara region, often with a pharmacy student from the University of Toronto in tow. He meets with the nursing staff to review how residents are doing and if any changes have occurred that might suggest a different approach to medications. Emeka talks to the doctor who is doing the prescribing, reviewing histories, issues and concerns as well as prescribing options. Then he’s off for his most important meetings – with the residents who rely on medications to keep them healthy and independent.

It’s this ‘bedside manner’ that really wins people over and enables Emeka to hear and see precisely how the medications are doing.

While training in pharmacy at Purdue University in the U.S., Emeka first discovered how he could help seniors. “We asked seniors to bring all their drugs when they came in for their appointments,” he says. “We’d review their drugs and drug history and make notes to the physician. We would also counsel seniors before they went home,” he continues. “I came to realize how easy it is for many elderly people to take their drugs improperly due to the complexity of the regimen. I knew then that was where I can make a difference.”

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People waiting in Haiti for care

Medical Pharmacies pharmacist conducting MedsCheck with client

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Homes with a Difference

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Emeka Ume with his colleagues France (translator), Antoneta Ionitoiu, Emeka and Jane Klasen ready to begin their clinic day in Carberet, Haiti

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Senior Vice-President
Long Term Care Services

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