



SENIOR
PHARMAssist

Medicine Chest

Summer Newsletter 2022

Education - Prevention - Access



Expanding our Services

Bridging Gaps in Medication Access

Senior PharmAssist opened its doors to older adults in Durham on June 23, 1994. Having just passed our 28th Anniversary, we are opening our doors even wider. Our neighbors and friends have been wonderfully supportive of our work and this allows us to reach more people...with more assistance.

This is good news because many Medicare beneficiaries struggle to afford their medicines despite having Part D drug benefits.

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Inside the Medicine Chest

Helping other Communities

Learn about our efforts to bring the Senior PharmAssist model to three other communities – *page 2*

Hellos and Best Wishes

Meet new Board and Staff members and our best wishes to others – *page 3*

Honor Roll

Join us in thanking our many generous donors – *pages 4-7*

A recent article in the Journal Health Affairs revealed that 39.4% of expensive prescriptions went unfilled by Medicare beneficiaries between 2012 and 2018 – and that percentage was nearly twice as high among beneficiaries with the most limited incomes.

Due to growing concerns about supporting basic financial needs for our participants, we added several medications to our list of covered medicines, including newer medicines to prevent blood clots (and thus strokes and heart attacks), and to treat nausea and prevent shingles!

“Pharmacoequity” is a relatively new term in the literature but it is what Senior PharmAssist has done since we opened our doors. Our supporters continue to help us provide life-saving medications in addition to ones that really improve our neighbors quality of life. We love Durham for many reasons and helping us cover critical medication costs is near the top of the list.

Helping Other Communities Jumpstart Similar Services

As far as we know, no other organization integrates medication access and management, tailored community referrals, and Medicare counseling like Senior PharmAssist. We believe it is the combination of these services and how we conduct our work that generate positive health outcomes with our participants - decreased use of hospitals while improving self-rated health.

Four pillars help us focus on our participants' priorities. These efforts support building genuine relationships and trust over time. They include:

- using a racial equity framework so everyone feels welcome,
- integrating motivational interviewing (for example, by using more open-ended questions),
- providing continuity of care by remaining in close contact, and
- networking with other healthcare and social service providers in Durham so that together we have a more user-friendly and coordinated system of care.

Last summer, with the support of partners like the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services and the NC Office of Rural Health, we conducted a statewide survey about similar services across North Carolina and received 366 responses. We then requested applications to work with three communities over the next year working with colleagues at Duke on a replication project: “Senior PharmAssist: Co-Design and Evaluation of a Toolkit to Promote Scalable Implementation.”

Working with our Duke partners and with federal grant support, this project aims to help three communities in NC adopt and adapt the SPA model to their needs. The effort will also provide us with valuable feedback about how best to disseminate some of what we have learned over the years. This project will run through May 2023 and we will be working with clinical pharmacists, senior service programs, older adults and many other stakeholders in Buncombe, Guilford, and Pitt counties. We believe this work will not only mean more older adults improve their health, but that Senior PharmAssist will learn new things to improve our services in Durham and that income from this work in the future will help the Durham efforts flourish. This is a win-win-win that we are excited to support.

Hellos and Best Wishes



We're excited to welcome our newest staff member – Rachel Pennington!

Rachel obtained a Bachelor's degree in Biology from UNC Chapel Hill and completed her Master's degree in Gerontology from UNC Greensboro. Prior to joining SPA, she worked as the director of an adult day health center focused on supporting family caregivers and participants in need of daytime services and support. She is passionate about assisting older adults age in place with the resources they need to live as comfortably as possible. In her spare time Rachel enjoys hiking, baking, and taking care of animals at her family's small farm.

We also welcome the following three new board members and know that their influence will loom large as we move forward:

Alice Dillard and her family pharmacy – Triangle Pharmacy – has been a well-established health partner in Durham for years. Alice is currently on the Board of Mutual Drug and understands the critical nature that independent pharmacies play in our communities. She has mentored many a pharmacy student – including our own Sheri Omozokpea.

Some of you may remember **Meri-Li Douglas** from her "on stage" sharing at our breakfast a few years ago. She has served on our Participant Advisory Council and uses her good humor and training as a Presbyterian member to keep us positive and moving in the right direction. She has previous experience working with the UNC-Chapel Hill Program on Aging.

Dr. Janet Hortin has been a long-time supporter and is a physician with extensive experience helping home-bound older adults. She is especially excited about helping our participants navigate Medicare, afford their medicines, and streamline medication regimens.



Meri-Li Douglas and Jane Tandler

We are sending extra gratitude and appreciation to several wonderful board members whose terms with us have ended: **Deborah Jenkins, Roslyn Muse, Darius Russell, JR Terry, and Woody Warburton**. Each of them brought invaluable wisdom and energy to our work and their voices will be missed at our Board meetings. The extremely good news is that we have them lined up to remain on committees or as office volunteers!

Finally, we thank **Phoebe Brush** for her efforts to kick-start our work with other communities in the State and **Jane Tandler** for four years of creativity as our Development and Communications Director. Fortunately, Phoebe will continue to help with Spanish interpretation and Jane will be working closely with the Dean of the Duke School of Nursing so we are expecting our inter-professional collaboration to grow. We are confident that Jane and Phoebe will continue in their community-building missions!

Consultants **Rachael Clemens** and **Vanna Labi** will continue to support our work with other communities, and they join a cadre of Duke partners who help facilitate and evaluate those efforts. We will keep you informed as we begin this exciting work.

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Endless gratitude to all who contributed to our program between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022

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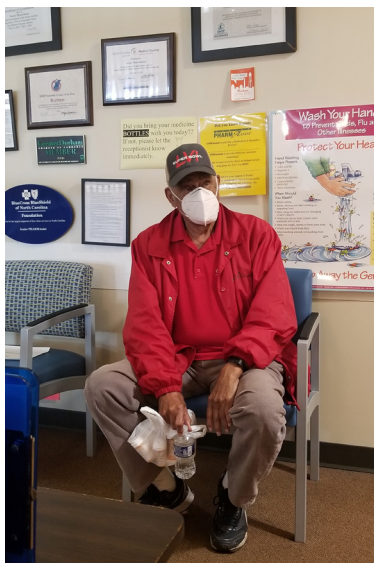
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Senior PharmAssist Voices

We celebrated our 28th Anniversary in June by creating two 5-minute videos to share what folks are saying about our work and to help our supporters understand how their gifts matter. We also want more Durham residents to see the videos and then give us a call!

Watch them at our website:
www.seniorpharmassist.org



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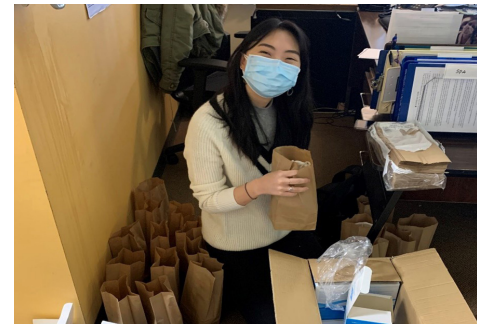
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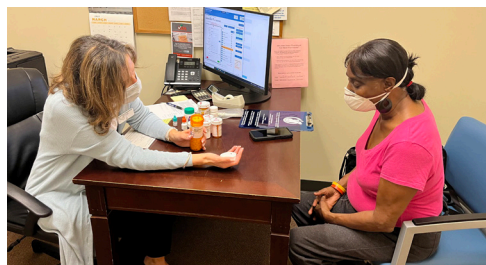
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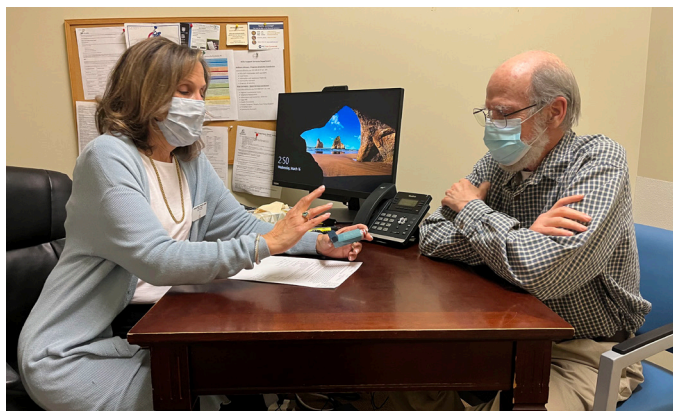
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Community Services Director Katrina Nesmith at an outreach event

Outreach Volunteers Needed

Volunteer with us! Now that individuals are more “out and about,” we’re looking for outreach volunteers to get the word out about our services. As we wrote in one of our Medicare Misunderstandings and Musings, over half of Americans who could be eligible for financial help with their Medicare Part B premiums are not enrolled – we need your help to reach them. Opportunities include: attending outreach events, stuffing envelopes, and delivering brochures. E-mail info@seniorpharmassist or call 919-688-4772 if you’re able to help!



Senior PharmAssist Staff

Marilyn Disco, PharmD, BCGP	<i>Clinical Services Director</i>
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Sheri Omozokpea, PharmD, BCGP	<i>Clinical Pharmacist</i>
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 Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Yuen

Please contact Patricia Trull at 919-688-4772 or ptrull@seniorpharmassist.org with any questions about the Honor Roll.



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Dirty Dozen: Medicare Misunderstandings and Musings

We're excited to introduce a new series of informative pieces from our Medicare experts. Every Tuesday we will clarify a different common misunderstanding about Medicare. Be sure to follow us on social media so you don't miss anything! The installments will also be posted on our website.

FY22 SHIP Volunteers

Peter Adland	Collette Driscoll
Jay Barbaccia	Bruce Hays
Bill Boyarsky	Anna Hung
BJ Boyarsky	Henry Luftman
DeLon Canterbury	Roslyn Muse
Jim Drennan	Mackie Spruill
Lorna Doucette	



JOIN US FOR MEDICARE BASICS

In these free seminars, our experts will give a comprehensive introduction to Medicare and answer your questions

UPCOMING DATES

Thursday, July 28th, 6-7:15pm
Southwest Regional Library
3605 Shannon Rd, Durham, NC 27707

Tuesday, August 16th, 6-7:15pm
East Regional Library
211 Lick Creek Ln, Durham, NC 27703

Register: knesmith@seniorpharmassist.org
919-688-4772