



Marialice S. Bennett

It Takes a Team to Create Change

Marialice ventured into clinical pharmacy at its inception in the 1970s, learning as she went because clinical education and clinical residencies were just beginning. She was indeed a pioneer and risk taker. Her career has focused on instituting new clinical practices and training residents and pharmacy students. She has continued to be innovative in creating, implementing, and conducting Community and Ambulatory Pharmacy Residency programs as well as cofounding, with a physician, an employee interprofessional wellness health clinic (University Health Connection). Marialice is one of only a few women who have served as president of American Pharmacists Association (APhA).

She completed her bachelor of science in pharmacy at The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy. Marialice is currently Professor Emeritus, College of Pharmacy, The Ohio State University, and Director of the Community and Ambulatory Care Residency Program.

In her letter she states that there were times it was necessary to ask forgiveness rather than permission in creating a new practice and that *it would not have happened if we had followed all the politically correct channels.*



Dear Young Pharmacist,

Some would say I am a pioneer. I would say I am a risk taker. I don't believe I have ever had an original idea. But I have always been able to "catch" an idea and then make something innovative or creative happen. Motivational speaker Joel Barker says, "Vision

without action is just a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.” One must take risks to do all three. One must take risks to become an agent of change.

I had the amazing opportunity to become one of the first clinical pharmacists in the country in the early 1970s. I completed my internship at The Ohio State University Medical Center during a time when intravenous admixture programs, unit dose dispensing, and pharmacy liaisons to the nursing units were introduced as pilot projects. When I returned to the medical center as a pharmacist, I opened the ninth and tenth floors to unit dose dispensing and technician administration of medications, and I began creating clinical pharmacists’ roles on the nursing unit and on medical teams. It was a magical journey with magical people. Our administrative staff made us believe we could be agents of change even though we had not been trained for the new roles we were creating. Even though we were taking high-stake risks, we believed in ourselves, in each other, and in the new evolving roles for pharmacists.

There were times in the early years of clinical pharmacy when doing the right thing for the patient was very risky. As I reflect back, I had guiding principles that directed my risk-taking activities. I had managed to gain enough trust to begin to round with the medical teams on both the renal service and the renal transplant service. I remember holding an inappropriately high dose of gentamicin on a patient with renal failure because I could not find any one who was willing to change the order of the attending physician on the renal transplant service. The fellow from a renal service told me, “You know what you need to do.” So I chose to hold the evening dose. The next morning, the attending physician was irate and refused to allow me to round any more on his service. That was OK—I did what I knew I needed to do. Three months later I was personally paged by that same attending physician to dose one of his patients in renal failure on methicillin, and I was welcomed back to the team. I have always felt that the moment when I did what I knew I needed to do for that patient was the moment I became a clinical pharmacist.

Many opportunities grew from the “back door” approach of creating trust and building relationships with other health care providers. Finding physician champions was key to my success in creating change. Supporting medical students and interns during their training led to strong partnerships when those same practitioners became residents