



## Barbara Schlienzer Prosser

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### *Networking Is Not Overrated, It Is Underestimated*

If you were to ask members of Barb's team about working with her, you would hear terms such as fairness, caring, supportive, doing the right thing, and networked. Barb is a leader that understands the value of a team, getting things done as a team, and the importance of a network. As you will read, she learned these lessons early in her career and has used them in many aspects of her life.

Barb most recently served as Vice President of Clinical Operations for Critical Care Systems/Accredo and has more than 25 years in the home infusion industry. She has helped develop and shape this industry through volunteer leadership positions in organizations such as the National Home Infusion Association, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, and the Joint Commission including serving as a Surveyor in the Home Care, Ambulatory, and Network Accreditation programs for the Joint Commission. She received her bachelor of science in pharmacy from the University of Florida, College of Pharmacy in Gainesville.

Barb's letter focuses on the value of networking. Through her personal experiences, you will relate to situations where you will benefit from your professional or personal network for help or support. As Barb states, *it's never too early in your career to network.*



Dear Young Pharmacist,

“**W**hat's the best advice I can offer?” That is an interesting and difficult question! As I reflect on my career in search of a response, I believe many things shape my best

advice: organizations, people, family needs, mentors, and even lost opportunities. But the people and the connections stand out by far.

The people I have met along the way have opened endless doors for me. Walking through those doors has led me to new job opportunities including opportunities to lead for change. I have had the privilege to work with the best in our profession, make changes in policy, and redirect energy and focus during committee work. These people had the greatest influence on my career. Thus, the focus of my advice is to meet and network with the leaders in our profession. Those connections will provide you with the ability to move beyond your safety zone and explore new avenues.

Networking is not overrated; it is underestimated. My first job in the home infusion industry ended badly. I was with the company two years and had worked my way into a management role. The company was sold, and the new management and I did not see eye-to-eye. I was ultimately let go and found myself jobless and coincidentally expecting my first child. I took some time to reassess my situation and work through all the emotions you might imagine related to loss of a job. It was a time of transition in my life; I was nervous about being jobless, and nervous about how being “let go” would influence my ability to find a satisfying job. The natural inclination would be to find a job in my comfort zone, but I knew I needed more. I was about to be a first-time mom and wanted some time with my child. I wanted flexibility and not to be tied to a weekend schedule. I was married to a nuclear pharmacist who worked weekend nights and slept during the day. I clearly needed to reinvent my job description.

I thought long and hard about where I wanted to go in life and in my career. I believed I had found my niche in home infusion and wanted to stay in the field. I also needed to factor in my soon-to-be family and how I would need to balance that. I realized that the traditional hospital rotating schedule was not optimal for me, nor did I want a full-time commitment. I basically wanted a part-time, meaningful career to keep me engaged in my profession as well as home with my family. So I reached out to my network to see what was out there. I spoke to colleagues in academia, long-term care, and in retail. Then, I reached out to a consultant I had worked with during my last days at the company. He seemed to have the flexibility and challenge in his job that I was looking for. The company brought him in to retool our processes and workflows, and I had spent considerable time with him on the job