

"MORTAR & PESTLE" CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN SCHOOL OF PHARMACY STUDENT WRITING CLUB:

# Business Member Spotlight: North Shore Pharmacy

by Gracie A. Wilson, 2026 PharmD Candidate

**K**yle Beyer, PharmD, BCACP is the owner of North Shore Pharmacy, which has two independent pharmacy locations in Shorewood and Cedarburg, Wisconsin. He first became the owner of North Shore Pharmacy in Shorewood in March of 2020 and went on to purchase the Cedarburg location in March of 2022. Though a newer owner, Beyer has had a strong passion for independent pharmacy throughout his career. His interest really developed after an advanced pharmacy practice experience rotation at Boscobel Pharmacy with Michelle Farrell, PharmD, a past President of the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW). There, Beyer discovered what independent pharmacy has to offer patients and walked away from the experience wanting to own an independent pharmacy one day. After earning his doctor of pharmacy degree from the University of Iowa in 2010, Beyer moved to Wisconsin

and worked for 10 years at various large chain pharmacies. However, it became clear to him that his desire to serve patients in a unique and creative way through independent pharmacy remained.

## Day to Day Practice

During a typical day, Beyer will visit both stores, starting in Shorewood. There, he assists with the daily workflow to help get through the first busy hour or two. Once things start to get settled, Beyer will spend some time in the office working on administrative tasks, catching up on emails, working on insurance contracts, following up with vendors, and checking in with staff. He will then travel to the Cedarburg location to cover lunch breaks and assist throughout the daily workflow as needed, while also continuing administrative responsibilities.

At each practice site, the pharmacy has two full-time pharmacists who focus on direct patient care. Whether it is checking

prescriptions, counseling patients, talking to physicians, administering vaccinations, or other community pharmacy tasks, the primary motivation is providing exceptional patient care. North Shore Pharmacy's Shorewood location is a stand-alone building located in one of the densest residential communities in Wisconsin and is more of a traditional community retail pharmacy. North Shore Pharmacy & Compounding Center in Cedarburg has a leading compounding laboratory that is capable of providing personalized medications for patients and pets; it serves both locations. The compounding pharmacist often works on checking compounded medications, creating new formulas, and talking to doctors and veterinarians about what can be compounded. These medications are customized to the needs of the patient or pet and will often require effective communication with providers and research

**Bottom-left:** (left to right) Maureen, RPh.; Kyle Beyer, PharmD.; Rachel, PharmD. **Bottom-right:** North Shore Pharmacy interior.



into what compounds can be made and how to effectively compound the product. In addition to compounding medications, the Cedarburg location is further involved with assisted living and long-term care pharmacy tasks, including bubble packing medications and setting up pillboxes for patients. The pharmacists work closely with nursing directors and care managers to communicate patients' new orders and discontinued medications, and to provide updated bubble packs and pillboxes.

North Shore Pharmacy strives to provide care that is simple and local. The pharmacy team has incredible camaraderie and focuses on a patient-centered approach to pharmaceutical care. North Shore's work environment allows pharmacists to have more time to answer questions and phone calls from patients or providers. To simplify prescription filling services for patients, North Shore has invested in user-friendly scheduling software that allows patients to easily schedule appointments. As technology

continues to expand, being accessible for patients via technology will also grow. North Shore Pharmacy has recognized this and offers patients the ability to directly text the pharmacy. This level of communication as a healthcare provider enables better communication about what prescription refills are needed, what prescriptions are ready for pick-up, and whether the patient needs another physician visit before getting more refills. It also improves the daily workflow by saving patients an unnecessary trip to the pharmacy. North Shore Pharmacy has shown that it is possible to advance the integration of technology while continuing to foster patient relationships through being personable, friendly, attentive, and kind. Along with keeping things simple, Beyer also focuses on keeping things local and wants to ensure that the pharmacy gives back to the communities that support it. The pharmacy is actively engaged through frequent donations to nonprofit organizations in the community.

Whether supporting the local school play or partnering with a local organization like the River West Food Pantry, North Shore Pharmacy looks to be involved within the community to show that if people choose them, some of that support will come back into their community.

## Raising the Bar

North Shore Pharmacy has implemented innovative practices from the beginning and continues to offer a variety of unique services and products that set them apart from other pharmacies. Over the last three years, they have worked to have an efficient vaccination workflow. From the ease of appointment set up with their scheduling software to the administration of the vaccine, the process of receiving vaccines remains smooth and seamless for patients. North Shore Pharmacy is also able to provide vaccinations for children as young as 6 months of age, compared to the typical 6 years at other community pharmacies, because they hired a registered nurse to assist them through the busy vaccination season. Other unique services include medical at home, delivery of bubble packs and pillboxes, durable medical equipment (DME), diabetes shoes, and compression stocking fittings. For patients who do not live in a facility but need assistance with their medication, the pharmacy is able to use medication synchronization, manage their day-to-day medications, and deliver to these patients to ensure the patient is getting the correct drug therapy. Often, patients can be on a multitude of medications that are constantly changing, making it extremely difficult for patients to keep track of what they should be taking. North Shore Pharmacy is able to assist these patients at home or in long-term care facilities by filling and delivering new bubble packs and picking up the changed bubble packs.

One of Beyer's largest achievements was the successful transitioning of two independent pharmacies from one owner to another. This success is attributed to the staff's teamwork and cultural approach to problem-solving through exploring solutions rather than saying no to any new challenges. Not only is the staff extremely friendly, they are able to provide high-quality community pharmacy care by being proactive in reaching out to patients—for example, to ensure they were expecting a change in dose,

*Below: (left to right) Kyle, PharmD; Tabitha, PharmD; Jerry, Technician; Adrianna, CPT; Ashlee, Technician*



to keep them updated if there is a delay due to insurance, or to save them time by letting the patient know they need an additional follow-up appointment before getting more refills. With such a wide range of products and services, staff members are trained to become product experts. North Shore Pharmacy supplies patients with DME including walkers, grabbers, raised toilet seats, grab bars, and much more. Patients or family members will often come in to pick up products following procedures, but they do not always know what they need. North Shore Pharmacy can show them the various products, explain the differences, and make recommendations based on the patient's specific needs to ensure they walk out of the pharmacy with everything they need.

### Bumps in the Road

Beyer's success with North Shore Pharmacy does not come without challenges. The number one challenge currently facing his pharmacy is reimbursement from insurance. The company that determines how his pharmacy is reimbursed directly owns one of his competitors. This lack of a level playing field can be frustrating for independent pharmacies because competitors are getting paid more for the same product at the same level of efficiency, even though the level of service may be different between pharmacies. One of the viable solutions that recently came out was a proposed Wisconsin Pharmacy Benefit Manager reform. This new bill could help level the playing field for independent pharmacies. According to the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin's Pharmacy Legislative Action Network, some key components would

include a ban on differential copays or incentives/penalties for specific in-network pharmacies, and the prohibition of reimbursing affiliated pharmacies more than unaffiliated pharmacies.<sup>1</sup> Although this bill has yet to be implemented, it is important to continue advocacy at the pharmacy level for regulations like this to create that level playing field and keep independent pharmacies relevant in comparison to large chains.

### Moving Forward

As Beyer and North Shore Pharmacy look to the future, maintaining a stable, friendly, and convenient location for patients is essential. Their biggest referral comes from current customers, making patient-centered care all the more important. As a large part of the population continues to age, Beyer believes that medical at-home care is going to expand rapidly, and assisted living or long-term care facilities will likely be unable to handle the sizeable influx of patients. Providing care for these patients in their home is a unique skill that many pharmacies will have to learn, but for North Shore Pharmacy, it is already something that they do extremely well. The pharmacy will be able to provide medications, DME services, and continued delivery with other complimentary services. Increased responsibilities of medical at-home care will create an incredible opportunity, but it will also require an increased workload for pharmacists. This workload may provide the opportunity for pharmacy technicians to acquire an elevated role through the implementation of tech-check-tech. This is a process that would allow pharmacy technicians to perform

final checks of medications prepared by other technicians. Additionally, automation of prescription filling and labeling would provide more opportunities for pharmacists to work directly with patients.

When asked what advice he has for individuals interested in independent pharmacy, Beyer recommended reaching out to an independent pharmacy owner and starting research. The best place to start research is the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA).<sup>2</sup> The NCPA provides many resources on its website and hosts conventions that allow you to learn about pharmacy ownership and get you in touch with a mentor. Beyer says, "The next best thing to do is reach out to an independent owner and talk about what we do. We are happy to share successes and challenges and put you in contact with somebody else we know that does the type of thing that you are really interested in. We only succeed if there is a vibrant network of successful independent pharmacies, so all of us are rooting for that!"

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Gracie Wilson is a 2026 Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate at Concordia University Wisconsin School of Pharmacy in Mequon, WI.

### References

1. Pharmacy Legislative Action Network (PLAN). Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin. Accessed November 19, 2023. <https://www.pswi.org/plan?vvsrc=%2fCampaigns%2f109003%2fRespond>
2. Ownership Resources. National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA). Accessed November 19, 2023. <https://ncpa.org/resources#ownership>

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