

THINK PHARMACISTS

VOLUNTEERING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

PROFILE

Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board Chair
Taggart Norris



In 2004, Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board chair Taggart Norris was a young pharmacy assistant when she witnessed something that inspired her and changed her career. While working at a pharmacy in St. John's, Taggart watched her mentor help an elderly patient.

"I remember watching one of the pharmacists spend 15 to 20 minutes with an elderly patient who was prescribed a medication after knee surgery that could interact negatively with the current medication he was on. The pharmacist took the time to explain the medications, possible negative side effects and what to look for. I remember how appreciative the client was. It was then that I realized the profession was more than putting pills in a bottle, it involved having a major impact on people's lives."

After that Taggart saw the profession differently. She was inspired to become a pharmacist.

From then on, Taggart was compelled to give back to the profession beyond the daily patient interaction. Her work alongside several inspiring, female pharmacists, some of whom were also members of the board, prompted her to put her name forward as a volunteer.

"I found them to be an inspiration of how I'd like to practice. I thought, 'I can do that, let's give it a go!'"

Once on the board, Taggart discovered that volunteering opened up a different side of the profession. For her, volunteering allowed her to see the bigger picture. It was a window into the many parts of what it means to practice as a professional pharmacist - the struggles and benefits of working in a self-regulated profession.



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Taggarty's most memorable moment in her tenure as Board Chair was welcoming registered technicians into the profession. Taggarty is proud to be part of the movement that entrusts trained professional pharmacy technicians to help with the technical aspect of the job. She acknowledges the movement has been a vital evolution in allowing pharmacists the opportunity to practice to their full potential. "It's a really big step in the right direction, having trained professionals to rely on to take on those technical tasks."

Taggarty says her personal goal as Board Chair is to lead the next generation of pharmacists to get further involved and volunteer.

"I hope to be the one to inspire involvement." When asked what she would say to someone considering volunteering she said, "Go for it!" Taggarty says volunteering "was one of the best decisions both personally and professionally I've ever made."

She says volunteering for the board is a great way to see the knowledge of seasoned professionals blend with the expanded scope of knowledge coming from today's pharmacy graduates.

"Having everyone work together can bring new and different ideas to the board, which results in a well-rounded model of practice and better client care."

Finding the time to volunteer is a challenge for everyone and Taggarty is no exception. She is the managing pharmacist of the Lawtons Pharmacy in Paradise that sees hundreds of patients per day. She is also the mother of a busy two year old so balancing work, home, and volunteer expectations can be difficult. But, she says, it is not impossible.

"Having a flexible employer and fellow staff members who support helps. When I say I have board meetings or I have to attend this conference, there is never any issue, and planning ahead always helps."

Taggarty says any scheduling challenges are more than worth it. "Be prepared to learn a whole different side of your profession."