

Seventeen: A Growth Spurt Year

by Executive Director Gina Upchurch

In May, I was honored to address the graduating class of the UNC-Chapel Hill Department of Public Policy, where I spoke about how to achieve success with any community-based program or policy. In putting together those remarks, I drew heavily from my experience as executive director of a program that has kept pushing and innovating for more than 17 years. I feel that **Senior PharmAssist** graduated to a new level in FY 2011 and is poised for even greater things in the months and years to come. Perhaps the CliffsNotes' version of my speech will explain our journey:

1. While it sometimes feels like a luxury, whenever possible: Be fueled by your passion. At Senior PharmAssist, we are passionate about making a measurable impact in the lives of older adults we are privileged to work with. Seeing the positive results we achieve on a regular basis keeps us energized. Finding your passion in your work is a gift and a key to long-term success.
2. Keep your ear to the ground about the issues you work on and remain open to new perspectives. In particular, it is *critical* that you find ways to be with the people and places that may be impacted by any policy you are considering. And when you can, allow those being affected to tell their own stories. This will keep you honest and inspired. Of course, it is important that you listen to and learn from those with other ideas and interests, including individuals who benefit from the status quo. Consensus-building and compromise are also essential to the long-term success of any policy or program.
3. Now comes the trickiest job: Try to decipher the core of your idea and stay focused on that central belief with integrity. Think of integrity operating at two equally important levels: the individual level and at the core of your idea.
 - a. In terms of the latter, the test is to ensure that political gamesmanship does not strip away the basic tenets of what you are fighting for. The core of your idea needs to hold together amid forces that might pull it apart. This does not mean the idea or policy cannot be altered in any way.
 - b. In addition, you will likely have to place your personal integrity on the line. It will take courage to speak up when a concept is on fast track and yet alternative ideas ring more true for you.

At Senior PharmAssist, our passion, our responsiveness to community need and direction, and the integrity of our mission are as strong as ever. This isn't to say that we aren't facing challenges. As with many other nonprofits, we need to reverse the trend of the last three years when our expenses exceeded income. We have hired an associate director so that we can continue to help more people and also take the time to convince others (with stories and data) that our efforts are worth investing in.

With 78 million U.S. baby boomers knocking at Medicare's door, we need your continued support. In years to come more and more Medicare beneficiaries will require access to medication counseling, reliable medical coverage information, and tailored community referral. And many seniors in the City of Medicine will continue to require direct financial assistance to obtain the medicines they need to support their well-being.

We believe that Senior PharmAssist has crafted a unique program that saves healthcare dollars and improves lives. With reform changing the delivery of healthcare, our program will offer even greater value to seniors, caregivers, and providers in Durham. In fact, we not only want our model of care to be sustainable in Durham; we want it to spread throughout the evolving Medicare world. With your continued support, we can make it happen.

Participant Characteristics

Senior PharmAssist directly paid for the medications of 329 out of the 1,422 individuals served in FY11. Of those 329:

- ◆ 76% were female
- ◆ 73% were either single, divorced or widowed
- ◆ 54% were Black and 46% were White
- ◆ 54% lived alone
- ◆ 11th grade was the average level of education achieved
- ◆ 73 was the average age
- ◆ \$1,402 was the average single person's monthly income and \$1,903 was the average couple's monthly income

We continue to target our outreach to find more Durham seniors 60 or older who need our financial assistance.

FY11 REPORT CARD

JULY 1, 2010 - JUNE 30, 2011

Senior PharmAssist provided one-on-one assistance to 1,422 individuals in FY 2011, an 11 percent increase from the 1,280 served in FY10. Our program directly paid for the medications of 329 participants in FY11, usually as supplemental coverage to their Medicare Part D benefit. These participants also benefited from:

- one-on-one medication reviews with clinical pharmacists trained in geriatrics, who closely coordinate pharmaceutical care with healthcare and social service providers
- hands-on help sorting and selecting prescription coverage and better understanding medical insurance; this year in Durham there are 33 Medicare-approved drug plan choices and 17 Medicare Advantage

plans that include drug coverage

- tailored health education and community referral
- and if eligible help applying for governmental subsidies and/or other medication assistance.

Of the 1,422 persons we helped, 139 had incomes that were low enough to qualify them for Medicare's full low-income subsidy (LIS). While these individuals did not need our help directly paying for medicines, they benefited from Senior PharmAssist's other services.

Participants who receive our financial assistance are seen by staff twice a year for medication therapy management. Individuals who qualify for full LIS have the option of being seen at six- or 12-month intervals. In FY11, we also furnished 16 individuals with incomes between 200 to 300 percent of the federal poverty level with comprehensive medication reviews.

Senior PharmAssist helped 601 Medicare beneficiaries who did not receive medication reviews but did receive help maximizing prescription and/or medical benefits. Our Medicare counseling saves individuals out-of-pocket costs and can lead to clinical interventions because these services are supervised by pharmacists who screen for medication appropriateness. Due to the widespread need for help with Part D drug benefits and Medicare health insurance, we offer this assistance at no charge to Durham residents regardless of income or age.

Finally, we assisted 337 people by providing them with tailored referral to other medication assistance resources, primarily drug company patient assistance programs. Individuals calling from outside Durham County or with questions about long-term care insurance were referred to the state Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program.

Donated time in FY11

Volunteer Hours (excluding Board & Committee Members)

Office, SHIIP, Outreach & Fundraising Volunteers	1,913
Pharmacists, Pharmacy Students & Interns	1,169
Professional Consulting	164
Total	3,246

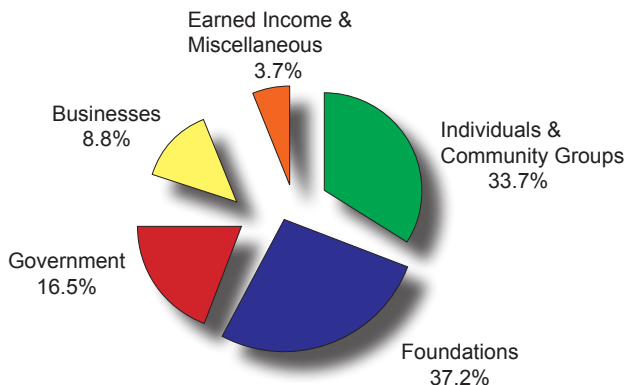


Pharmacist Kelly Scolaro volunteers with us weekly, helping expand our capacity to provide medication therapy management & other critical services.

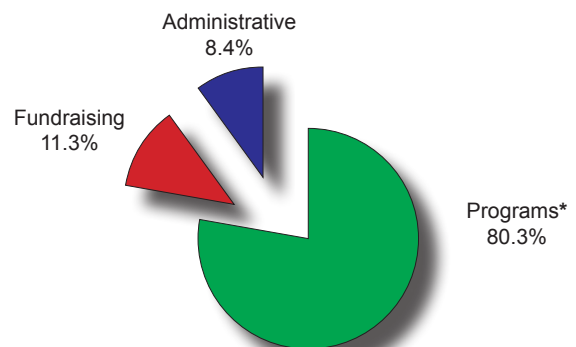
FY11 Financial Status (audit not yet complete)

Senior PharmAssist finished the year with revenue \$66,145 below expenditures, a deficit offset by funds from our reserve. Revenue numbers do not include \$189,200 gifts-in-kind (volunteer hours, donated items, etc.).

FY 2011 Revenue (\$569,606)



FY 2011 Expenses (\$635,751)



*Programs include Prescription Purchases, Medication Therapy Management, Evaluation, Public Awareness & Community Referral

"Senior PharmAssist changed my life – of course they did. I have no reason to be sad!"

— Participant Josephine Hailey