



Bob Mattice - Cold Lake Pharmacist on the Front Lines of a Pandemic

Bob Mattice has been a pharmacist since 1981 and has owned his own pharmacy in Cold Lake for 32 years. Bob's brother is also a pharmacist at a neighboring pharmacy and they participate in some friendly competition. While he is a pharmacist by day, he also moonlights as a stand-up comedian and has competed in the "Edmonton's Funniest Person with a Day Job" contest.

Q: How did you find yourself needing to prepare for an unexpected pandemic?

A: Of course, nobody could have prepared for this- this was totally unexpected. However, the important thing is how we are reacting to this! I am extremely grateful for the efforts of both RxA and ACP in providing guidance to pharmacists during this uncertain time! I check the RxA COVID-19 information page daily to stay current on patient care and safety recommendations. It makes our team feel better, knowing that there are people working to make our practice easier for us.

Q: How are you addressing the safety of your staff and patients during this time?

A: Lots of ideas come from my amazing staff! We work to decrease stress by protecting the staff. We are extremely grateful for the PPE obtained for us by RxA and are looking forward to implementing that into our practice to better protect ourselves once it arrives. In the meantime, we have installed plexiglass barriers on the counters, observe a stringent cleaning routine and practice physical distancing.

Q: In what ways are you finding barriers to patient care with physical distancing?

A: The largest barrier is how impersonal protective measures can be. We must stay 6 feet apart and that can have barriers for those who are hard of hearing, sensitive about their medications being discussed out loud, etc. Each patient is unique to their needs and we try our best to accommodate them.

Q: How are you finding ways to overcome the communication and patient care barriers?

A: While my pharmacy team has not adopted "curbside pickup," we take appropriate precautions for contact exposure as outlined by ACP. A simple practice I try to reduce communication barriers is maintaining eye contact with patients during a discussion. They need to see their pharmacist smiling, not scared. That being said, PPE is very welcome and needed. We have plexiglass installed for the front tills, post office, pharmacy counters. We have continued injections (B12, long-acting injectable psychotics, etc.), but limit to just one pharmacist providing them. Many patients are also essential workers and we recognize that their injectable drugs help them to function and fulfill their roles during this crisis.

Q: How are you managing the extra cleaning practices?

A: Tidy up after hours- get rid of things that are in the way and aren't used on a daily basis. Try to keep up with it, so it isn't overwhelming and stick to a disinfecting schedule. Reduce hours if needed.



Q: Similarly, how is your pharmacy team finding ways to stay healthy and relieve stress?

A: Our pharmacy alternates staff to limit exposure - two teams of people working different days so that we still have staff if one team becomes ill. For the mental health side of things, we encourage chatting with peers over the phone, reading pharmacy-related Facebook posts, and seeing best practices and innovative ideas of our colleagues.

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