


Cover story

For Chuck Hastings, MPA's 123rd president, family and pharmacy are two things that just go together. His father was a partner at Northline Pharmacy in Southgate, and Hastings spent his formative years there. Hastings figures he's done probably every job there is to do in the pharmacy, from stocking shelves to cleaning the parking lot. Rather than seeing it as a burden, Hastings, as one of eight siblings, considered his time working in the pharmacy as family time, and welcomed the opportunity to interact with his father.

Though his children chose other professions—his son Charles, a Princeton graduate, is the head trader for a hedge fund and daughter Alison, a graduate of the University of Michigan, is an environmental geologist—business in the pharmacy continues to be family-based, as Hastings employs several family members. One sister, Rita, a pharmacist; two other sisters, Lynn and Ileen; and a brother, Mike, are key pharmacy staff. His wife Pam, a co-owner, has been instrumental to making the pharmacy what it is today.

Growing up in the pharmacy undoubtedly gave Hastings a more accurate perception of working in the pharmacy than most. He saw aspects he liked and others he didn't like, but the thing that convinced him that he should become a pharmacist was the interaction with people. "What really keeps me coming back is the appreciation that the majority of the people have for the help we give them," says Hastings. For Hastings, watching other pharmacists interact with patients gave him an indication of how rewarding the profession could be. In fact, he never even considered another career option, so

convinced was he that pharmacy was for him.

Hastings worked his way through school at Northline Pharmacy before graduating in 1976 from the University of Michigan College of Pharmacy. Upon graduation, he immediately began working as a staff pharmacist at the pharmacy. In 1982, Hastings and his wife Pam became part owners after his father retired, and in 1991 they became the only owners. Pam Hastings then tackled the project of doubling the pharmacy in size and updating its look. She took charge of a huge expansion and remodeling project that gave the pharmacy a more modern appearance.



Pharmacy and Family are Intertwined for Hastings

*Andrea Rybicki,
MPA Director of Communications*

Charles Hastings, MPA's 123rd president



Hastings at Northline Pharmacy

Hastings speaking at the 2006 Annual Convention & Exposition



Hastings with the 2006 MPA Executive Board



Hastings outside the MPA office building in Lansing

In 1996, Hastings became a member of the Sav-Mor Executive Board. This led to him being exposed to MPA and he began to consider getting involved in the association. "I realized there was a choice to be made. I could either sit around and complain about things or get involved and help change them," says Hastings. At that point, he joined the MPA Third Party Committee, which deals with insurance reimbursement and other third party payor issues. His role in the association expanded when he was called upon by MPA CEO Larry Wagenknecht to run for the MPA Executive Board. After discussing it with his family, he realized that he was at a point in his life where he could commit enough time to a board position to make it worthwhile. When questioned as to what ultimately made him decide to serve on the board, he commented, "it comes down to paying back to the profession the things that it has given you."

Hastings encourages all of his colleagues to get involved with their association. For him, it has been a truly rewarding experience. He speaks of the camaraderie he feels with the other pharmacists he has met through involvement in MPA. Though some of those individuals have similar practices to his, some do work that is distinctly different. With this interaction, Hastings has found prevailing similarities amongst MPA members. His interaction with different types of pharmacists has been interesting, and he has found that the colleagues he has met share many of the same goals—they all want to serve the patient in the best manner possible.

The professional goals Hastings has for his pharmacy run parallel to the goals he has for MPA, which include improved patient care. He has spent a lot of time developing patient counseling services in his pharmacy, and a bonus of that is that it built up his business. Through consistently exceptional patient care services, his pharmacy has compounded its patient base. Since his pharmacy has a large elderly population, Hastings and his other pharmacists spend a lot of time counseling patients about their medications. The services they provide their elderly patients, from checking for duplication of therapy to finding more cost effective medication regimens, have become even more necessary with the advent of Medicare Part D.

Hastings sees an important role of MPA as helping to coordinate medication therapy management services through gathering and disseminating information about these types of programs. He feels that much of this information has yet to make it to the individual pharmacies and thinks that MPA's participation is crucial to bridging the gap between existing programs and the individual programs. According to Hastings, "It will be important for the leadership of MPA to work with all practice settings and academia to guarantee the pharmacist's role in this new standard of care."

As MPA's 123rd president, Hastings will no doubt use the experience and his philosophy for bettering the pharmacy profession and patient care to help further the mission of the "MPA family."