

Search

How do I find it?

Subscribe to paper

**NETFLIX**  
 Rent (500) Days of Summer today!  
**Watch Movies From Netflix**  
**FREE TRIAL!** [Click here](#)



[Home](#)
[News](#)
[Travel](#)
[Money](#)
[Sports](#)
[Life](#)
[Tech](#)
[Weather](#)

Become a member of the USA TODAY community now!  
[Log in](#) | [Become a member](#)  
 What's this?



[News](#) » [Health & Behavior](#)
[Swine Flu](#)
[Your Health: Kim Painter](#)
[Weight Loss Challenge](#)
[Medical Resources](#)
[Health Information](#)

# Your Health: Pharmacists adjust to changing roles

Updated 3d 20h ago | Comments [27](#) | Recommend [13](#)

[E-mail](#) | [Save](#) | [Print](#) | [Reprints & Permissions](#) | [RSS](#)



**Your Health**  
 Kim Painter

By **Kim Painter, USA TODAY**

Share

Yahoo! Buzz

Add to Mixx

Facebook

Twitter

More

Subscribe

myYahoo

iGoogle

More

Should you be spending more time with your neighborhood pharmacist? Or less?

Recent studies suggest either could be true for people who take medicines for chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma and high blood pressure. For example, one new study suggests people who fill prescriptions by mail are less likely to run short of medication. But other studies show those who meet regularly with druggists stay healthier and save money for their insurers.

The studies come as pharmacists try to find their place in a world where prescriptions can be filled more cheaply by mail but where people struggle to use their medications consistently and correctly.

"The role of the neighborhood pharmacist is undergoing a major transformation," says Edith Rosato, a senior vice president at the National Association of Chain Drug Stores in Alexandria, Va.

Case in point: One big chain, [Walgreens](#), just announced a four-city pilot program in which store pharmacists and nurse practitioners act as medication coaches for customers with type 2 diabetes. Such programs augment, but do not replace, physician care, Rosato says. They are needed, she says, because about half of people with chronic diseases fail to take medications correctly, which costs the health system \$290 billion a year.

"There's a lot more that can go on in a pharmacy than filling a prescription," says William Ellis, executive director of the American Pharmacists Association Foundation, a non-profit group in Washington, D.C.

Pharmacists in one program studied by Ellis' group counseled 573 diabetes patients for a year and helped them normalize blood glucose, lower blood pressure and improve cholesterol levels while saving \$1,079 each in health care costs (compared with projected costs).

Pharmacists can "provide that face-to-face conversation that just doesn't happen enough" in today's fractured health system, Ellis says.

But right now, most busy neighborhood pharmacists can't spend long hours counseling patients, says O. Kenrik Duru, an internist at the [University of California-Los Angeles](#). They are too busy, he says, filling pill bottles, dealing with insurers and doctors' offices and serving long lines of customers — many of whom show up for simple refills.

### Efficiency vs. personal touch

In a new study, Duru and researchers from [Kaiser Permanente Northern California](#) found diabetes patients in that system who refilled most prescriptions by mail were less likely to run out of medicine than those who went to pharmacies.

### Featured video



**'I don't quit'**  
 President Obama fought to reset after a bad year.



**Harry Potter**  
 See how you can get a sneak peek of the wizard.



**Apple's iPad**  
 Talking Tech checks out hot new tablet device.

[More: Video](#)



[Enlarge](#) By Sam Ward, USA TODAY

### MEDICINE SALES

Sales of prescription drugs by U.S. retailers totaled \$253.6 billion in 2008. Where sales took place:



Source: National Association of Chain Drug Stores

### HAVE A HEALTH OR MEDICAL QUESTION?

**STAPLES**  
 that was easy.®  
**Hot tech deals!**  
**Roll over to see more.**  
  
**Compaq laptop with Vision Tec... ONLY \$399.98**  
 Save \$130

---

## Daily Briefing E-mail Newsletters

### Sign up to get:

- Nation's top news
- Money, Sports, Life, Travel, Tech and more



Sign Up Now

### Related Advertising Links

[What's This?](#)

#### **Why Penny Stocks Is the In Thing**

Our subscribers are profiting 100% gains...

[www.PennyPic.com](http://www.PennyPic.com)

#### **Buffalo Residents: \$85/Hr Online**

Don't Try to Work at Home Until You Read this...

[www.News6Reports.com](http://www.News6Reports.com)

---



**dbrain** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 2d 19h ago

You know every patient is required to see their Drug dealer every six months at least and usually ordered for tests of one kind or another and charged for, of course, as well as each visit. BUT what if these tests are rigged to claim you are suffering from abnormallies and you need either a prescription or an operation ( now called a "procedure")??? And what if what had been considered normal for years and you had never been sick from that time but you find that figure has been changed on the tests and NOW show up in red ??? And what if those earlier figures were correect because your body needs to be at those figures but now the DRUGS lower (or increase) these conditions so NOW YOU ARE REALLY ILL BUT ALSO ADDICTED TO THE NEW PRESCRIPTIONS AND FOR LIFE ??? who benefits ???

Recommend | Report Abuse



**dbrain** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 2d 19h ago

FOLLOW THE DIRTY MONEY !!!! First the meds are fixed so they will not cure a thing- no profit >>> Next the drugs are phoney and are not medically proven as being helpful for your condition and THEY ALL HAVE SIDE EFACTS FOR MANY THAT WILL REQUIRE MORE DRUGS, in other words they do more harm than good so not taking them is probably best for gramma and any others. Then if you buy by mail, tho the dr still gets his kick back- the drugist now only doesn't make money either but the bringing you into the store usually results in you spending for other items there instead of in a different even cheaper store. often for other products equally as bad and doctored up with chemicals like the drugs prescribed by your drug dealer. The key to this argument is the statement that it is estimated 290 million a year is lost by " the health system>". By people who don't always take the poisons- actually a form of rehabilitation as the prescriptions cause addiction and are designed to be taken for life !!!! Can you estimate how much they rake in for those prescriptions on those who DO TAKE 6-9 a day !!??!! wHAT A RACKET and unlike the dealer in the alleys subject to arrest these dealers collect from those who are not yet turned into addicts but pay extortionate premiums to the insurer bagmen for the medical industies >>>> WHAT NERVE-- WHAT FRAUD-- YES LADY THEY SHOULD ALL BE IN JAIL !!!!

Recommend | Report Abuse



**psmdfwsma** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 2d 20h ago

Anyone who trusts a pharmacist to practice medicine is a fool!  
MD: NBME; ABIM; ABNM; ABR w/spec comp NR

Recommend | Report Abuse



**psmdfwsma** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 2d 21h ago

I have purchased Lipitor from on line Canadian pharmacies for 6 years.  
I get a 180 day supply of the real Pfizer product (I'm a personal investor in Pfizer) for US\$134.10 incl S&H.  
My MC part D plan wants US\$67. Tier 3 supplement monthly.  
Serious joke!  
ret expat MD

Recommend | Report Abuse



**FLSUN** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 2d 22h ago

Cheaper ain't always better. You get what you pay for.

-----  
I wouldn't trust the mail order system. Too much risk for loss, theft and delay. I have Kaiser in So. Cali and they really push it and will charge \$10 less to use the mail order. However, you have to plan a minimum of 10 in advance and that can be delayed if the doctor must be contacted. That can add another 2-3 days if the doctor (more often his nurses) don't do their scrip checks. I'll go to the pharmacy, thank you.

-----  
I agree it is hard to see how it could be cheaper to use a mail-order drug program, with rising shipping and mailing costs. Fortunately, I am healthy and do not take any prescription drugs, but the whole process looks to be rather nerve-wracking, enough to raise somebody's high blood pressure even more, trying to deal with people on the other end of an 800 number and waiting for your shipment to arrive, etc. There is no substitute for a local pharmacist you know and trust, and who is easily accessible.

Recommend | Report Abuse



**mami** (4 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 2d 23h ago

I usually prefer having the pharmacist's input, but I just had an experience that now has me



wondering.

My 80-year-old Mom has been in denial about her memory problems. We alerted her doctor and he prescribed meds.

When Mom went to the pharmacy, the pharmacist told her, "Once you start this, you can never get off." At least, that's what she heard him say. Of course, her own doctor had already told her and us, her children, what to expect in terms of increasing, decreasing or stopping the medication, and that's not at all what he said.

She took the meds home and promptly "lost" them. We're now starting over, trying to convince her to listen to her doctor and not her pharmacist.

[Recommend](#) | [Report Abuse](#)



**Francis2** (7 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 3d 2h ago

**anner** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 36m ago

You see you doctor so I think the Pharmacist's and ins co's need to stick to their real job.

Pharmacists know more about how medications work than physicians do.

My mail order service has a pharmacist available 24/7 for info. on my Rx's

[Recommend](#) | [Report Abuse](#)



**david w. osedach** (19 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 3d 3h ago

I am open to any of the recommendations our pharmacist makes.

[Recommend](#) | [Report Abuse](#)



**anner** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 3d 3h ago

You see you doctor so I think the Pharmacist's and ins co's need to stick to their real job.

[Recommend](#) | [Report Abuse](#)

**More comments on this story:** [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [Next](#) ▶

#### Sponsored Links

##### **Why Penny Stocks Is the In Thing**

Our subscribers are profiting 100% gains that's why.

[www.PennyPic.com](http://www.PennyPic.com)

##### **Buffalo ! \$87/hr Jobs? Official Report**

Our Shocking Special Report Investigates Online Jobs. Read More...

[www.News6Alerts.com](http://www.News6Alerts.com)

##### **5000% Gain on Penny Stocks**

Penny stocks can jump 5000% Join Today for Free to Profit.

[www.stockpicktrading.com](http://www.stockpicktrading.com)

[Get listed here](#)

#### **Newspaper Home Delivery - Subscribe Today**

[Home](#) • [News](#) • [Travel](#) • [Money](#) • [Sports](#) • [Life](#) • [Tech](#) • [Weather](#)

**About USATODAY.com:** [Site Map](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Jobs with Us](#) | [Terms of Service](#)  
[Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Right](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Press Room](#) | [Media Lounge](#) | [Reprints and Permissions](#)

**News Your Way:** [Mobile News](#) | [Email News](#) | [Add USATODAY.com RSS feeds](#) | [Podcasts](#) | [Widgets](#)

**Partners:** [USA WEEKEND](#) | [Sports Weekly](#) | [Education](#) | [Space.com](#)

Copyright 2010 USA TODAY, a division of Gannett Co. Inc.