

MEET THE OWNERS: WELLNESS RX

AN INDEPENDENT PHARMACY WITH A UNIQUE HOLISTIC APPROACH

by Barbara Reina photos by Matt Petricone

date posted: NOVEMBER 07, 2016



OWNERS ED AND PATTY ULLMANN of Wellness Rx in Tannersville have left behind the corporate chain pharmacy approach. Instead, they've created a pharmacy model that includes natural and alternative remedies, holistic methods, patient education, pharmaceutical internships, community workshops, and massage therapy—and they've wrapped it all in an environment that feels like home.

Ed and Patty believe the corporate chain pharmacy experience can be generic, impersonal, and stressful for both patient and pharmacist.

"It's not an environment where you can do your best work or work outside the box," Ed says.

"OUR OVERALL GOAL IS TO ESTABLISH A NEW MODEL FOR RETAIL PHARMACY IN AMERICA THAT BRINGS IN THE TRADITIONAL ART OF PHARMACY WITH NATURAL AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE," ED SAYS. "NO ONE ELSE IS DOING THIS."



In May, the business moved from High Falls into the historic Astor House, a sturdy Victorian home built in 1890. Tourists and mountain locals alike can feel at ease walking through the front door into an open room filled with natural light and wooden floors. Local honey, essential oils, and over-the-counter medications are displayed on well-lit shelves.

Education is another part of the Wellness Rx experience. The Ullmanns often explain to patrons their medication and treatment options, in addition to providing fact sheets.

“THE ROMANCE OF PHARMACY IS BEING OF SERVICE TO PEOPLE, LISTENING TO THEIR STORIES, AND WORKING WITH THEM—WHETHER IT’S WITH A LITTLE KID OR A SENIOR CITIZEN,” ED SAYS. “IT’S HELPING THEM KNOW THAT THEY ARE NOT INVISIBLE.”

The pharmacy is uncluttered and complete with state-of-the-art technology, internet access, antibiotics, ointments, compounding capabilities, vitamins, supplements, flu and shingles immunizations, and free blood pressure screenings. A sitting room is located to the right of the front room, where patrons can relax with a coffee table, couches, and chairs, and a door leads to a private counseling room.

The Ullmanns also want to create positive memories for children visiting the pharmacy. They recently held contests for children to name two beta fish at the pharmacy counter, and friendly staff encourage children to find as many animals as they can in a painting by Ed that hangs on a nearby wall.

“THE KIDS CAN COME IN AND SAY HI TO THE FISH,” ED SAYS. “THIS COULD BE ONE OF THEIR FIRST EXPERIENCES IN THE HEALTHCARE FIELD. I WANT IT TO BE A FRIENDLY ONE INSTEAD OF A FEARFUL ONE.”

"BY BEING A MENTOR, YOU'RE CREATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CARING PHARMACISTS," ED SAYS. "IT'S SO POWERFUL TO ME THAT I COULD DO SO LITTLE AND WATCH THE TRANSFORMATION."

Working directly under Ed, a student from the University of Rhode Island, another from the Albany College of Pharmacy, and an international student from Vienna gained practical experience in the operation of what Ed calls a "patient-centered pharmacy."

Patient care, health, and education are not resigned to the first floor. The upstairs rooms are actively used for massage therapy and lectures. Goals for additional use of the second floor rooms include acupuncture, nutritional counseling, classes, and community workshops on wellness and healing.

If you are looking for a unique, holistic pharmacy, stop in at Wellness Rx in Tannersville.

Wellness Rx accepts all major insurance companies, and prescription transfers are available.

Edward Ullmann is a licensed pharmacist with retail experience as a pharmacy district manager and operator of independent pharmacies. His international experience includes the development of a nationwide prepaid health plan in Mexico (MediPlan). Ed served for 16 years as the founder, chairman, president, and chief executive officer of Wellcare, which developed and managed six operating HMOs. He holds a BS degree in pharmacy from the Albany College of Pharmacy, an MPA degree from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, and was a national HMO fellow at Georgetown Medical School.

Patty Ullmann earned a business degree from SUNY Cobleskill and served for 21 years as a community educator for Planned Parenthood of Dutchess-Ulster.

