

A Life-Sustaining Oasis

Category: At the Pharmacy

written by Ronna L. Edelstein | May 2, 2024

The interns and even the pharmacists come and go, but all of them quickly learn to recognize me, since I spend a lot of time at the pharmacy. That is because my prescriptions are never ready to be refilled at the same time. However, I don't mind what others may see as an inconvenience. It does not bother me to stand in a long line, waiting for my turn.

That's because my pharmacy is located in a large neighborhood grocery store; it is perfect place to meet a diversity of people as I wait—individuals who put my pill needs in perspective. I don't require any drugs for cancer or a chronic disease. I don't worry about the cost of my drugs, since I have a good insurance plan. And I'm not concerned that the long line will make me late for work, as I am retired.

The pharmacy is more than a meeting place, however; it is also my health-care center. I get my vaccines there; I get answers about drug interactions there that I sometimes don't get from my PCP. A free blood pressure machine lets me keep an eye on those important numbers.

Yet despite these positives, being at the pharmacy often makes me feel vulnerable. I know that I am dependent on certain drugs to give me a better quality of life. I recognize that, at age 76, more meds may be necessary to keep me going. The pharmacy does not let me forget that I am aging—and mortal.

I wish I could be like my paternal grandmother who, for ninety years, took no prescription drugs—but that is magical thinking. I am who I am, and my body is what it is. That is why being at the pharmacy is like discovering an oasis in a desert. It provides me with support and hope; it offers me the oil that keeps my human engine running. I know that the round bottles of prescribed pills will benefit me. These life-sustaining medications—and the pharmacy that dispenses them—are gifts that I do not take for granted.

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