Miri am A. Mobley Smith, Pharm.D.  
Chicago, Illinois

For Dr. Miriam Mobley Smith, questions left unanswered in childhood inspired her to seek out answers and take action. It was difficult for her to see her brother suffer from severe asthma and near respiratory collapse. It was even harder for her to understand why her brother did not respond as quickly as she did to the medication they each received to treat pneumonia.

“I felt then that there was a calling for me to work with medicine so that I could understand it,” she said. “I wanted to be part of a profession that makes a difference in health and well-being.”

Throughout her career, Mobley Smith has used her personal life to inspire action. After graduating from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) College of Pharmacy, she set her sights on making a positive impact in community health. She also continued to polish her hobby as a singer, performing on many stages throughout her life, including the famed Cobo Hall in Detroit.

Today, Mobley Smith is a clinical assistant professor and coordinator of Academic Programs in the Department of Pharmacy Practice at UIC. She focuses on experiential education, community outreach and the improvement of the medication use system.

Through involvement with the Healthcare Professionals Education Roundtable, she is actively working to strengthen multidisciplinary approaches to health care delivery. “This is particularly important when dealing with illnesses such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease. There’s the diagnosis, treatments, lifestyle and dietary issues that need to be addressed to improve the long-term patient outcome,” she said.

Senior citizen health care also is a personal crusade since the death of her great-aunt due to an adverse drug interaction prescribed by two doctors. Funded by the Area Agency on Aging, Mobley Smith is part of a team that educates seniors about safety in medication use, necessary immunizations and vaccines, and the importance of health care screenings. “We need to take a closer look at elderly communities, which have become threatened by what we call medication misadventures,” she said.

Low literacy rates are of particular concern when it comes to drug administration. “Because of the levels of illiteracy all over the world and the language barriers within countries, Mobley Smith is working to minimize people to the need for universal symbols on medication labels. In her teachings, she emphasizes how factors such as economic, social and cultural life issues play into the reason of health outcomes.

To further improve the integrity of the medication system, Mobley Smith has been involved in pharmacy technician education and training for 16 years. “The medication prescribing and distribution system is only as good as its weakest link. That’s why it’s critical to maintain education, training and certifications so that patient safety is maintained,” she said.

“It’s a long road, but we’re doing it,” she said. “As long as we keep working hard, we’re making progress.”

ONE GOAL: To Impact

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