

Pharmacist's past pizza experience delivers



TREVOR JONES / Ohio Northern University

CLAY MILLER, a resident with the Ohio Northern University College of Pharmacy HealthWise program, walks with a delivery on Gilbert Street in Ada. The pharmacy now offers free prescription delivery service to anyone within a 40-mile radius of Ada.

ONU Healthwise offers free prescription delivery

By **SARA ARTHURS**
STAFF WRITER

ADA — A mobile pharmacy delivering medications to those who need them grew in part out of a pharmacist's experience delivering pizzas.

Ohio Northern University's HealthWise, a mobile clinic affiliated with the university's pharmacy school, has offered to deliver medications to those in need within a 40-mile radius of its location in Ada. That's a distance that includes both Lima and Findlay.

Clayton Miller, who worked to develop the delivery service, graduated from the university in 2019, and is now doing a residency with ONU HealthWise. He

As a "small, independent pharmacy" HealthWise handles 50 to 100 prescriptions per day, while a larger pharmacy might handle several hundred.

CLAYTON MILLER,
HEALTHWISE

said the mobile clinic tries to reach out to the community and provide care. It might go to, for example, a food pantry and provide health screenings.

But Miller has also worked as a pizza delivery driver and still occasionally helps out at East of Chicago in Ada. He said he saw "the utility of the delivery service" and realized that delivering food was a "rewarding encounter." As a "natural

extrovert," he enjoyed that delivering pizza meant getting to know the regulars and building relationships. He said the same concept applies to delivering medications.

The mobile pharmacy had initiated delivering prescriptions in January, before the pandemic hitting our area. At first it worked closer to Ada itself, before announc-

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ing recently, amid the coronavirus pandemic, that it would expand to a 40-mile radius. Under the direction of ONU HealthWise director Michael Rush and Steven Martin, dean of the college of pharmacy, ONU HealthWise agreed to deliver prescriptions as far as Findlay, Lima and Kenton.

Miller said some of the community's residents live out on country roads and don't have transportation to get to the pharmacy. He said the mobile pharmacy fills "a really unique niche."

As a "small, independent pharmacy," Miller said HealthWise handles 50 to 100 prescriptions per day, while a larger pharmacy might handle several hundred.

Miller is the main driver, and takes about 80 to 90 percent of the deliveries. He said it helps that he is himself a pharmacist, in case a patient

has questions. The organization is not delivering a large number of prescriptions yet.

Miller said another aspect of the project is the growing recognition within health care of what are known as social determinants of health — that is, things not explicitly associated with medical care like access to transportation, access to food or the presence of abuse in the home might play a big role in a person's health.

As an example, he said the mobile pharmacy had a patient who would drive up and park outside the pharmacy, but could not get up the ramp into the vehicle. So, when delivery service began, Healthwise staff realized they could just take the medication to that individual.

He said the delivery of prescriptions will not end when the pandemic abates, if people are still in need of the service.

Asked what's most rewarding about the work, he said, "I mean, it's the people."

To reach the pharmacy, call 419-772-3784.