

GOLF

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

our chemistry changes and the muscle mass is affected. A lot of physicians don't understand that."

Getting doctors to listen sometimes is the hard part, he said.

"What I do, I know well and I'm willing to share with a physician," he said.

Some of his patients end up going to another physician because the original physician won't listen.

"A lot do and fare a lot better," Neel said.

As the baby boomers continue to age, Neel said, geriatric treatment will continue to grow as a field.

"There's about 10,000 of us out there that do this," he said.

"The new paradigm for the 21st century is patient care, something I started

34 years ago."

Because of his work, Neel was recently selected for an ask-the-pharmacist column on the AARP website as AARP's first geriatric pharmacist consultant. The site first ran a story on Neel in 2004 and has recently updated and rerun the story to introduce the ask-the-pharmacist column.

Neel will work on the column with Bill Hogan, an AARP producer with whom he has co-authored an upcoming book, "Are Your Prescriptions Killing You? How to Prevent Dangerous Interactions, Avoid Deadly Side Effects, and Be Healthier With Fewer Drugs," to be published next year by Atria Books, a division of Simon & Schuster.

See Neel's website for more information at <http://medicationexpert.com/>.



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'It's My Golf'

Pharmacist scraps retirement, becomes geriatrics expert

BY RAY LIGHTNER

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A Griffin pharmacist is showing doctors and patients that seniors may be overmedicated.

Armon J. Neel Jr. is a certified geriatric pharmacist and consultant who evaluates the medications people are taking to determine if they are taking the right medications and doses. Neel consults with nursing homes and individual patients.

This is something he has done for more than 40 years. It started as a suggestion from a friend but grew out of the way he started his practice, back in

1963.

Neel's father owned Neel's Pharmacy, but Neel didn't want to just fill prescriptions. So just two years out of pharmacy school, Neel opened an apothecary shop in Griffin across from the outpatient center, where he consulted with patients about medications and filled prescriptions.

He stopped filling prescriptions in 1977 and opened an institutional pharmaceutical consulting business, which he later sold in 2000 and retired.

"That lasted about three weeks," Neel said. "I didn't like being retired at all."

He started back seeing

patients and opened a consulting business with a website, medicationexpert.com.

"It's fun," he said. "It's my golf. When I get a new patient, it's like teeing up a drive."

He now visits nursing homes and hospitals five to six days a month. He goes over charts, talks with patients and provides recommendations.

"I go in and match the drug chemistry to the patient's chemistry," Neel said.

For for a positive outcome, he said, "you have to balance things out together."

He said, "As we get older,

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Griffin geriatric pharmaceutical consultant Armon Neel Jr. helps with the "drug therapy management" needs of senior citizens.