



New Opportunities to Give Back at Hope Dispensary

By: James Morganti

As of November 2011, pharmacy students now have the opportunity to gain valuable real world experience on rotation at the Hope Dispensary of Greater Bridgeport, a new charitable pharmacy in Connecticut. In response to growing poverty levels in the area, Hope Dispensary is dedicated to serving low-income and uninsured individuals in the local community by providing them short-term and long-term medication assistance. Prescriptions are offered free of charge to patients without coverage and who live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Located in the Department of Health building in Bridgeport, the free pharmacy opened in mid-April as just one of the latest additions to a nationwide network managed by Nashville-based non-profit Dispensary of Hope, and was launched locally in partnership with the Primary Care Action Group, an alliance of regional health service associations that includes St. Vincent's Medical Center, Bridgeport Hospital, and the City of Bridgeport. The effort to establish Hope Dispensary was further bolstered by a \$160,000 grant provided by Ascension Health and the full-fledged support of Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch.



UConn student Chien Lo introduces Hope Dispensary to local pharmacists.

On site at Hope Dispensary, Dispensary Coordinator Christine Toni, R.Ph., runs a tight operation, aided by Patient Navigator Beatriz Santiago and a small staff of interns. While Toni spends much of her time acting as a liaison for her patients to access affordable medications, she finds herself adapting many of the skills she learned over the years working in hospital pharmacy at St. Vincent's, from interchanging therapies to verifying patient needs, in order to tailor the best economic alternatives to her patients. "It's unbelievable how [Dr. Toni and Ms. Santiago] make full use of resources and how organized and well documented the process is," says Sherry Liu, a P3 student at UConn who worked at Hope Dispensary in November. Drawn to the rotation for its humanitarian prospects, Liu furthered the cause by matching patients'

Continues on Page 2



A Message from the Director

On behalf of the University of Connecticut Office of Experiential Education (OEE) I want to share my sincere appreciation for all of your hard work and dedication to our UConn pharmacy students this past academic year. We would be unable to provide our pharmacy students with high quality experiences without your participation in our experiential programs. It's hard to believe it but another academic year has just ended and we are already underway with our Introductory and Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPE & APPE) for this summer. The experiential rotations for our student pharmacists at the UConn School of Pharmacy never stop and continue throughout the year. We, therefore, appreciate the continued commitment from everyone who participates in our various IPPE and APPE programs.

The State of Connecticut legislative session this spring passed some legislation that will significantly impact the profession of pharmacy. One of those pieces of legislation that will go into effective October 1, 2012 will allow pharmacists to administer additional vaccines. It reads: "Any person licensed as a pharmacist in the State of Connecticut under part II of

Continues on Page 8

needs with medication in stock and checking for affordable options, as well as conducting research to explore which medications could be safely switched so that patients maintained positive health outcomes.

Much of the extra documentation Toni owes to the interns trained “on the job” who enable the dispensary to collect more thorough medication histories and calculate how much is saved through their interventions. In November, UConn students were able to apply these tools at St. Vincent’s Emergency Department in gathering medication histories from incoming patients. “Being well-rounded includes utilizing the skills you have to better the community,” says Toni, going on to say that by volunteering their pharmacy skills and fresh approaches to help the Bridgeport community, they provided “a win-win for everyone.”

Dan Pham, a fellow P3 student at UConn, and Liu agree that the most rewarding aspect working at Hope Dispensary was getting to know and directly assisting patients on a regular basis, even when the pharmacy might have had only two or three of the ten medications a patient needed. “Their concerns extend far beyond the fact that they cannot afford their medications,” says Pham, “and even though the dispensary can only help with some of their problems, [our patients] are very thankful for whatever help and resources we can provide.” “I think it gives people hope through their struggles,” adds Liu.

In the future, Toni hopes to offer Medication Therapy Management (MTM) to develop and encourage programs for preventative health. She hopes that public

contribution stays strong, as these funds are being used to cover shipping costs and distribution, to “get the word out” to clinics, pharmacies and patients in need, and to alert doctors’ offices to donate unused or short dated samples. For every dollar donated, Dispensary of Hope provides \$10 worth of medication.

“It is wonderful to have a position where people are so grateful for what you do for them,” says Toni, noting that since the pharmacy’s opening she has heard word of several success stories from patients reporting improvements in health due to diligent adherence to their medications, made possible by Hope Dispensary. “Hope Dispensary offers its patients a way to improve and maintain a healthier lifestyle that they would not otherwise be able to afford. Patients make the investment to provide necessary information and to follow the plans of their doctors and providers. We help them to achieve this by making their medication more accessible. It still depends on the patients to be in control of their health; we just help make that that more possible,” says Toni. ■

Did You Know...

Christine Toni was nominated as an American Red Cross Hero for lower Fairfield County?

Congratulations Christine!

Mary Petruzzi Retires

By: Elmira Fifo

For over twenty years, Mary Petruzzi contributed her talents, care and skills to the school of Pharmacy as an experiential education field coordinator. Petruzzi became an instrumental resource for students and gained the respect and care of her many co-workers. Her retirement earlier this fall was bittersweet as her presence will be missed by everyone in the school.



Mary Petruzzi, pictured with Dennis Chapron, was recognized for her service at the Preceptor Appreciation Dinner

In her work as assistant director of experiential education, Mary Ann Phaneuf recalls Petruzzi’s steady work ethic as one of her most admirable qualities. Petruzzi thrived in her role as field coordinator while engaging and enriching the students’ learning at their various placements in clinics, hospitals, and institutional pharmacies. Phaneuf explained that Petruzzi loved this role. Phaneuf adds, “She has always been a field coordinator. Part of her job is to meet and check on the students, to see if they had any questions or concerns.” This, she mentions, was not only what Petruzzi excelled, but also what she enjoyed.

Outside the comfort of the University of Connecticut’s walls, students on rotation rely on the coordinators for guidance. Throughout her years at UConn, Petruzzi was a reliable, friendly face for students.

- Continued on Page 8 -



University of
Connecticut

Contributors:

Elizabeth Anderson, Daniel Buttrey, Elmira Fifo, Philip Hritcko, Jacquelyn Lomp, James Morganti, Mary Ann Phaneuf, Kayla Ramsay, Peter Tyczkowski, Myles Udland.

Nailor and Pesaturo Named 2011 Dennis J. Chapron Preceptors of the Year

By: Jacquelyn Lomp

The University of Connecticut's School of Pharmacy recognizes exceptional preceptors each year by awarding a full-time faculty member and an adjunct faculty member the prestigious Dennis J. Chapron "Preceptor of the Year Award." Dr. Michael Nailor, Pharm.D, and Dr. Adam Pesaturo, Pharm.D, are the 2011-2012 recipients.

The award is named after Dennis J. Chapron, an associate professor of pharmacy practice at the School of Pharmacy for 34 years. Not only was he a teacher, but Chapron was seen as a mentor and friend to many students and colleagues. He left behind an immeasurable legacy that has been represented through an award honoring excellence in experiential teaching.



Dr. Nailor, assistant clinical professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice received the full-time faculty member award. His practice site is located

Dr. Michael Nailor, Faculty Preceptor of the Year

at Hartford Hospital, where he offers student rotations in the specialty areas of infectious disease and clinical research. At the hospital, he oversees antimicrobial stewardship, helping physicians select the best antibiotics for infected patients.

At UConn, Dr. Nailor teaches classes on infectious diseases and critical care, his research and rotation expertise. He is co-funded by the university and Hartford Hospital. This allows him to spend equal time, sharing his knowledge with his students while providing care for his patients. He is also the director of the infectious diseases pharmacy practice residency.

A typical day on rotation at the hospital begins with reviewing and performing patient assessments. In the afternoon, Dr. Nailor sets aside time to discuss the patients and their care with his rotation students and residents. Dr. Kelly Sullivan, one of his former rotational students describes Dr. Nailor as "going above and beyond each day to ensure that his students are getting the most out of his rotation. Each day he spends the afternoon going over patient cases, topic discussions and homework assignments. On average, he is in direct contact with his students for four or more hours a day...and ensures that every student gets the attention and learning experience that they need in order to succeed."

Dr. Nailor feels honored to be accepting an award from his students. He believes he is "challenging but fair," always pushing his students to their full potential. When asked about his teaching philosophy, Dr. Nailor commented, "I make sure they are doing as much real world work as possible, learning new things everyday. I enjoy helping prepare my students for their next position in life."



Dr. Adam Pesaturo Preceptor of the Year

pharmacy students rotations in his specialty area of critical care .

At Baystate Medical Center, Dr. Pesaturo is the critical care pharmacist for the medical/surgical intensive care unit. He dedicates the majority of his time to providing pharmaceutical services to critically ill patients. In addition to caring

to his patients, Dr. Pesaturo serves as an educator for pharmacy residents and students. Critical care pharmacy is the focus of his teaching to students on rotation.

Students start their rotation day by reviewing patients' medication list, medical problem list, labs and vital signs. After a short review, Dr. Pesaturo asks the students to make notes of any pharmaceutical problems that they feel need more attention. Once the students begin rounds, he models his practice while helping students through the whole rotation process. After rounds, the students break for lunch and meet for 30 to 60 minutes to go over a specific topic discussion, participate in MAR rounds, or discuss and follow-up on any medication interventions.

Dr. Pesaturo encourages his students to strive for the "ah-ha" moment which he stated comes when "they are able to take all they learned in didactic lecture and see either how it directly applies to patient care or when they learn the reasoning behind all the information they learned in lecture."

Dr. Pesaturo's initial reaction about his accomplishment was one of happiness and pride. "I feel happy because teaching is a part of my job that I enjoy a lot so I put a lot of time into creating a learning experience that I think the students will truly enjoy," he commented. Dr. Kevin Crozier, one of Dr. Pesaturo's former students, said, "His enthusiasm for his job and patient care plus his pharmacy knowledge really made this rotation enjoyable...Adam has exceeded my expectations and I felt that my exceptional experience on this rotation was due to him."

Together, Drs. Nailor and Pesaturo are exceptional preceptors and because of them, UConn's School of Pharmacy continues to excel in training highly educated students. The award is an expression of gratitude from the students for their outstanding contributions. ■

Hartford Hospital Offers Rotation in the Emergency Department

By: Jacqueline Lomp

Hartford Hospital offers an advanced pharmacy practice experience (APPE) rotation in which UConn students partake in a unique emergency setting by flying with LIFE STAR, Hartford Hospital's Critical Care Helicopter Service. Students are also offered the opportunity to observe medicine within the critical care department, the admittance of patients, and any issues that the hospital has while sending patients home. This significant opportunity for patient interaction provides students with an insight into emergency situations.

During this rotation, students partake in everything in the emergency department, including flights with LIFE STAR. They see patients diagnosed and treated, along with how they are given their medications. The students are involved in everything that has to do with a drug or the critical care department. They review discharged patients and have a collaborative practice with the emergency department director to adjust therapy based on results.

LIFE STAR is key component that enhances the real world experience for students on rotation, further adding to its uniqueness. "I got a chance to fly with LIFE STAR and it was an amazing experience," Sarah Livings, a current APPE student, said. "I was astonished that all of the equipment on the aircraft plays an important role for getting the best treatment for critically ill patients."

Rosana Oliveira, another APPE student, flew with LIFE STAR on Halloween. She was able to experience a flight that transported a patient from a health clinic to Baystate Emergency Department. "The staff was extremely welcoming and instructive," Oliveira stated. "It was a great experience and I would recommend it to anyone."

Gabrielle Jacknin, emergency medicine specialist in the Department of Pharmacy at Hartford Hospital, has been precepting UConn students for two years. She most enjoys "watching the students have new



experiences and helping to expose them to things they wouldn't necessarily ever get to see otherwise [but] just read or hear about."

Students benefit from this rotation because they are exposed to a wide array of medications that are only used in the department. A typical day in the emergency room consists of working up patients and making recommendations for their therapy, reviewing wound culture results, participating in topic discussions and responding to "red pods," any medical alert or trauma that enters the emergency room. When students "work-up" a patient this includes reviewing the reason for their admission, going through any labs the patient had, speaking to the patient about medication lists and calling their pharmacies.

"This rotation is much faster paced than my other rotations," Livings said. Students are offered more patient contact and are able to experience the nature of an emergency room setting. "Pharmacists can have a respected role in the emergency room and can play key roles in the care of a patient," Livings learned. "It was the perfect environment for me to improve my patient communication skills."

"I would recommend this rotation to other students without hesitation," Livings exclaims. By offering this unique advanced pharmacy experience rotation, students are able to gain practice in prominent areas where pharmacy plays an important role in the assessment and treatment of patients. ■

Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences

By: Elmira Fifo

An integral part of pharmacy education at UConn are Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPE) that require students in the first three years of the program to fulfill 100 hours per year in a specific pharmacy setting.

Ralph Frank, RPh, MPH, is an IPPE preceptor at Hartford Hospital. As pharmacy manager in the Department of Pharmacy Services, Frank assumed a significant role in the structuring of the IPPE program. He worked to implement a clearer, more structured program for student rotations. "We gave the program structure and direction. It has a whole new manual and we wanted it to be more beneficial to the students," said Frank. "The result of structure was a more consistent experience for the students."

In the previous IPPE rotations, there was much more idle time and students spent too much time in one area. "Now, the students work alongside our staff because they rotate around the central office. They go with pharmacists when they do rounds, or with distribution technicians to see the delivery process." The goal is to provide students with knowledge of diverse types of occupations. Every rotation consists of a minimum of four students so that they are given individualized attention. They are assigned a rotation randomly and they begin their experiential education at Hartford Hospital.

Hartford Hospital is one of the largest in the state, and the staff is invested in helping students explore each sector of the institution, from the cleaning room, to the dialysis room, to the trauma room. As a result, students witness the diversification of the hospital. Frank is adamant that the students understand each area because it gives them a range of experience. "The staff here is unique; they all have individual interests in oncology, dialysis, and cardiology. Students are able to see that pharmacists are becoming more involved in the medical process," he asserts.

- Continued on Page 8 -

Focus on Hospital Pharmacy - Dillingham Alaska

By: James Morganti

The remote town of Dillingham, Alaska is home to just under 3,000 residents—that's less than one-fifth the population of the UConn Storrs campus. Surrounded by miles of tundra, lakes, rivers, and forest, the town bears no roads to or from the Alaskan Highway, and the only way to reach it is by air or by sea. Every semester, the most adventurous pharmacy students looking for experiential knowledge have an opportunity to experience this world by living on compound and working on rotation at Kanakanak Hospital. Established in 1980 as the first officially tribal-run healthcare institution in the country, the 16-bed facility provides 24-hour medical, pediatric and obstetrical care with pharmacy and optometry services for the area. Monthly treatment is offered by cardiologists, psychiatrists and other specialists, and, once every three months, physicians fly out to do routine visits with patients at each of the twenty-four village health care clinics. For serious conditions, a hospital-owned plane stands ready to medevac patients to Kanakanak or Alaska Regional Hospital, about 330 miles away.

In Dillingham, students deal with unfamiliar health conditions particular to the distinct climate and culture, like the prevalence of food-borne botulism that comes as a result of the native tradition of eating fermented fish eggs and beaver tails and the use of plastic jars over glass. Patricia Cutting, a recent SOP graduate who completed a month-long rotation in April, spent six hours one day helping to administer CPR and provide warmth to a patient who had fallen into cold water, in an effort that involved not only the medical team, but 15 community members from EMS and non-clinical hospital staff as well. Cutting says she will “never forget the way the community pulled together selflessly to help at the hospital.”

For the most part, however, students will discover that pharmacy service at Kanakanak is not unlike that back home. The pharmacy's services are largely retail in nature, with pharmacists filling medications for pickup or mailing to patients in nearby villages. Interns work in both inpatient and outpatient pharmacy, completing village orders to keep local clinics stocked, taking care of inpatient orders where there is an



Patty Cutting on top of China Cap Hill in Dillingham, Alaska.

opportunity for clinical intervention, administering and monitoring IV's for inpatients, filling medication boxes, and even collaborating with preceptors to present research on inpatient care. “Practicing medicine in a small town like Dillingham is definitely different, but the outlook on patient care is generally the same,” says Rosana Oliveira, a P4 student who also spent ten weeks on rotation there beginning in July.

Unlike most retail settings in the lower 48 states, Kanakanak pharmacists full access to a patient's records, including lab values, follow-up notes and consultations. In effect, doctors get to know their patients very well and have more opportunity for clinical work, says Cutting. “With the small number of patients staying in the hospital (two to five during my stay, I believe), it was easier to be very involved in their care,” she contends, comparing the experience in Dillingham to her earlier rotation work at large academic institutions in New England.

The majority of patients the students encounter at the pharmacy window, the inpatient wing, and even in the cafeteria at Kanakanak are Yupik eskimos, the native people of the Bristol Bay region who make up over half of the population. At first, students may have trouble understanding their patients because the Yupik tend to speak more slowly and thoughtfully than other Americans, and many of the elders speak only in their native tongue. In counseling patients when they picked up prescriptions or were discharged, already

new territory for Oliveira, she humbly enlisted the help of translators, demonstrations and visual aids to communicate in counseling, and was happy to find that despite the language gap, her patients were very open and appreciative of her effort. “A little patience goes a long way,” she learned, “No matter where in the world you are. As a professional, you have to be able to adapt your counseling style and approach to all sorts of patients.” By the end of her rotation, Oliveira surprised even herself by learning some basic Yupik, and one day responded to a grateful patient with a “you're welcome” in Yupik, who gave her a big smile in return.

Looking back, Oliveira and Cutting know they'll never forget the people and experiences they encountered in their rotations in Dillingham, and can't wait to go back to visit their friends and explore the surrounding regions more. Currently on a PGY1 pharmacy residency at Children's Hospital Colorado in Denver, Cutting says that “Bristol Bay is continually on my mind,” and feels that her experience there motivated her to see how life and medical practice differs across the country. During her career, she hopes to travel with medical teams to provide care in remote areas at least annually. In May, Oliveira graduated with her Doctor of Pharmacy, and plans on completing her residency with a second year focus in psychiatry with prospects of working someday in a clinical setting helping patients with mental illness. Given the job market, she says, she is not opposed to moving to Alaska. ■

Baystate Medical Center Establishes an Advanced Pharmacy Practice Focus Experience

By: Jacqueline Lomp and Myles Udland

Starting in June 2012, UConn School of Pharmacy students will have a chance to engage in a new and extended rotation experience. UConn's School of Pharmacy is collaborating with Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, MA to establish a block rotation program they are calling an Advanced Pharmacy Practice Focus Experience. This program will give students a three to four month rotation block spent at Baystate that will require one institutional rotation and up to three electives in a focused area.

Dr. Erin Taylor, assistant director of inpatient pharmacy services and experiential education coordinator at Baystate, says that this new program will allow for a more comprehensive rotation experience for both students and preceptors. "UConn student rotations are usually only four weeks, and so by the time a student gets comfortable they are walking out the door," said Taylor. This new arrangement will allow UConn students to work closely in one facility for the duration of their block, allowing preceptors to expose students to a wider variety of experiences than a standard rotation typically allows.

Baystate Medical Center is a 659-bed academic teaching hospital that serves as the western campus of Tufts University School of Medicine that has been hosting UConn Pharmacy students on rotation for over 10 years. Baystate hosts over 120 students from local schools of pharmacy each year, allowing students a unique opportunity for interacting with peers and networking. Baystate currently offers seven rotation experiences including: pediatrics, critical care, cardiology, emergency medicine, infectious disease, internal medicine and hospital pharmacy. The Advanced Pharmacy Practice Focus Experience will allow a student to elect one of these areas as a focus for the program's duration, providing that student with a more cohesive and intense rotation experience.

Taylor describes the atmosphere to be "a direct reflection of our organization's mission: to improve the health of the people in our communities every day with quality and compassion. Our operating principles focus on trust, integrity, respect, communication and collaboration and these values are evident in all of our employees." As a result, Baystate is described as having a high level of engagement among the employees through all levels of the organization with a deep commitment to ensuring safe and effective care for patients.

Here, pharmacy students actively participate in medical rounds with teams and are given opportunities during their rotations to participate in clinical projects and research with members of the pharmacy and medical staff. BMC offers several rotations for UConn students including pediatrics, critical care, cardiology, emergency medicine, infectious disease, internal medicine and hospital pharmacy. "The elective rotations are very popular with UConn students, allowing them to participate in specialized care areas," Dr. Taylor reflects.

Additionally, Baystate creates an environment that will benefit students once they enter the work force. There are two healthcare teams within the single ICU, one medical team and one surgical team. According to Dr. Adam Pesaturo, the critical care pharmacist for the medical/surgical intensive care unit, "the environment within our ICU is one of great collaboration. Each person brings their specific expertise to the team and with all those different perspectives ultimately the best decision can be made for the patient."

The development of this new experience also coincides with Baystate's practice model expansion initiative. As part of this initiative, Baystate is exploring how to use resources in new and unique ways, to allow further integration of the pharmacist into direct patient care activities. "This new rotation will allow students to be more closely involved with a pharmacist's day-to-



Erin Taylor, assistant director of inpatient pharmacy services and experiential education coordinator at Baystate Medical Center.

day responsibilities," said Taylor. "And this will allow students to take on greater responsibility as preceptors explore new responsibilities within a healthcare team."

Ultimately, this new program will allow students to get an in-depth experience more akin to a residency than a rotation. The program begins with two students in June 2012, with the hope of further expansion in the 2013-14 academic year. As the roles pharmacists serve continue to change, UConn and Baystate look to explore new ways to educate the next generation. ■

Save the Date

The School of Pharmacy's Preceptor Appreciation Dinner will take place on Thursday, October 25, 2012 at Saint Clements Castle in Portland, CT.



School of Pharmacy Partners with the VNA's Fall Prevention Project

By: Kayla Ramsay

P3 students completing their service learning hours had a new opportunity presented to them. Lisa Bragaw, field coordinator in the Office of Experimental Education at the University of Connecticut's School of Pharmacy, was asked to join the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) East Community Outreach Fall Prevention Project by Phil Hritcko and Peter Tyczkowski, who created the project alongside the VNA. With the assistance of students, Bragaw, who is also a research specialist with the VNA, hopes this project will help find new methods that prevent patients from falling and injuring themselves.

With a grant provided by the Department of Social Services and Connection Collaboration for Pharmacy, the project required collaboration between doctors, nurses, physical therapists, and pharmacists to determine risk factors for patients over sixty-five.

The project ran for five months. During this time, people over the age of sixty-five had the opportunity to contact the VNA and request a fall risk evaluation, in which their risk level for falls that could lead to injury were determined based on their medications and lifestyle. The VNA identified patients on multiple medications, or with disease states such as heart failure and diabetes that would benefit from a comprehensive medication review. Those patients were referred to Bragaw, who in turn assigned each case to a student for a preliminary review. Occasionally, Bragaw and the students accompanied a nurse to visit a patient's home. "We wanted the students to see the patients in their own environment to better understand the nurses' roles and challenges that patients face," explained Bragaw. The students prepared an assessment and action plan to reduce fall risk by suggesting adjustments in medication regimens. They submitted their findings to Bragaw for a final review and revision, if necessary. The recommendations were then passed on to the case manager at VNA East. VNA East contacted the patient's physician who would then decide whether or not to adhere to the recommendation.

Medication Therapy Management (MTM) is a wide range of services provided by pharmacists to help patients with drug therapy and to stay knowledgeable about the medications they are prescribed. Bragaw described the fall prevention project as an "MTM project to a degree, except we're not counseling patients directly." Unlike other projects that Bragaw has been involved with, she did not have direct access to patients in this project, relying on the assessments by both the patient's doctor and the visit by the nurses and physical therapists to make her recommendations.

The biggest challenge Bragaw pointed out was "we are more reliant on nurses and doctors and what they're reporting rather than when we are able to directly meet a patient." This project required collaboration between pharmacists, doctors, patients, and other health care providers to help patients become independent, reducing the risk of falls and seriously injuring themselves.

Bragaw explained a benefit of this project was the developing trust between the different healthcare disciplines from this collaboration. She mentioned there was an effort to make sure that each department knows this collaborative effort is not a way for one department to seize control over another. She noted, "We want to make sure we come across as assisting the doctors to make their patients better. I make it clear to [the doctors], 'I'm not here to take over your role, but to enhance it.'"

The fall prevention project benefitted not only patients but also healthcare professionals. Patients witnessed how the system connects to provide the best possible recommendations for medication and mobility and living conditions. Healthcare professionals witnessed how vital collaboration, reliance, and trust between different areas of healthcare are in preventing patients from falling and injuring themselves. ■

Heather Upchurch Combines Love of Patient Care and Teaching

By: Myles Udland

Dr. Heather Upchurch has exceeded her own expectations. Upchurch, who graduated with a Pharm.D. from UConn in 2007, currently serves as the pharmacy residency coordinator at Holyoke Health Center, as well as a preceptor for UConn pharmacy students completing ambulatory care rotations.

Following graduation, Upchurch continued her post-graduate training with a residency at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. She then accepted a faculty position at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. At MCPHS, Upchurch served as an assistant professor of pharmacy practice from 2008-2010. "I enjoyed teaching but I wanted to spend more time interacting with patients and providers, offering comprehensive medication therapy management," said Upchurch. With this goal in mind, she joined the staff at Holyoke Health Center in 2010.

But even before beginning an academic program in pharmacy, Upchurch was exposed to the profession through her work as a certified technician in various fields of pharmacy, including retail, long-term care, and hospital. "I was always interested in the medical field but had a hard time finding a definite path," said Upchurch. "With the support of the pharmacists I worked with, I found that being a pharmacist would fit my career goals."

As Upchurch progressed through her studies, the world of pharmacy continued to present new and unexpected opportunities. Upchurch initially saw herself in a retail pharmacy setting, but through her rotations other pathways began to grab her focus. After completing faculty rotations in psychiatry and geriatrics, Upchurch decided to apply for a residency at Baystate Medical Center, a decision that has most directly impacted her current career track.

Through her time at UConn, Upchurch says she enjoyed each of her rotations, and cites Dr. Robin Bogner, associate professor of pharmaceuticals at UConn's School of Pharmacy, as a particularly influential

- Continued on Page 8 -

Director's Message

Continued from Page 1

this legislation may administer, to an adult, any vaccine, approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration that is listed on the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Adult Immunization Schedule, provided the administration of any such vaccine is conducted pursuant to the order of a licensed health care provider and in accordance with the regulations established." This new legislation is significant for our profession because it recognizes that pharmacists are in a key position as "front line" health care providers to provide an expanded array of immunization services for the purpose to improve the public health within our state of Connecticut.

While in the recent past we have not been able to allow Connecticut licensed pharmacy interns to administer vaccinations, this was recently addressed by the Department of Consumer Protection and Drug Control. Drug Control revisited the interpretation of the current regulations concerning pharmacy interns and has concluded that interns can administer vaccinations under the direct supervision of a Connecticut-licensed pharmacist, provided the pharmacy intern has successfully completed both an immunization and CPR certification program, and in accordance with established regulations.

The new interpretation comes after a review of the Connecticut Drug Laws and specifically the meaning of the wording "contemporary pharmacy practice." (See SEC 20-576-9 Authority of Registered Pharmacy Intern.) Since pharmacy practice is constantly evolving and being updated as a result of legislative changes the training of pharmacy interns needs to reflect this new pharmacy practice legislation. As part of our UConn School of Pharmacy curriculum we mandate that all of our student pharmacists be licensed pharmacy interns with the State of Connecticut. In addition, we provide certification training for both immunization and CPR to all of our P3 students in the fall semester as part of our Pharmacy

Practice Lab and Pharmacy Practice Experience courses. This qualifies our UConn P3 and P4 students to administer immunizations in the State of Connecticut, provided they are under the direct supervision of a Connecticut licensed pharmacist and in accordance with established regulations.

This is very exciting for our UConn pharmacy students because it provides another opportunity for their pharmacy practice experiences and to serve their communities. We have designed our curriculum to include our student pharmacists during their P3 year to administer vaccinations as part of their Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences. We are looking for opportunities to include our UConn student pharmacists in vaccination clinics at your practice sites. If you would like to participate in this activity in conjunction with our students please contact me for more information.

Sincerely,



Philip M. Hritcko

Introductory Practice

Continued from Page 4

In their four weeks at the site, students learn from a range of preceptors and pharmacists. Most importantly, they are made aware of the expanding opportunities outside of general pharmacy. Frank values his role as a preceptor because he enjoys the impact he can make. "It is fun to watch students grow into a profession and I like their inquisitiveness," he says. He advises his students to ask questions, and keep their minds and horizons open. He exclaims, "Find that discipline that peaks your interest. Work becomes a passion if you are interested in what you do. Most of all, if you can find something that inspires you, your career will be rewarding." ■

Petruzzi Retires

Continued from Page 2

Fei Wang, an Experiential Preceptor at Hartford Hospital recalls how, for Petruzzi, the most difficult part for Petruzzi about retiring was leaving the students. "I think she struggled making the decision because she's really going to miss the students and the interaction she had with them." Phaneuf added that "in her field, [Petruzzi] got to know the students' personalities and she could give them advice based on their interests."

Mary Petruzzi may have spent most of her time on the field, but her presence certainly made an impact within UConn as well. Mary Ann and Mary are not simply co-workers; they are friends who bond over their daughters and similar experiences. "She was the voice and vision for the school and she's got a good heart," explains Phaneuf. "She would do anything for anybody; she's easy to talk to and approachable and really takes the time to listen to the faculty and students." Mary Petruzzi left her mark at UConn, and she will be remembered for years to come. ■

Upchurch

Continued from Page 7

professor. "Although Dr. Bogner's area within pharmacy is vastly different than mine, she is a remarkable educator and mentor," said Upchurch. "Dr. Bogner is supportive and yet helps students develop a great sense of independence. When I was a faculty member, I tried to keep her teaching methods in mind when helping students discover what kind of pharmacist they wanted to be."

Going forward, Upchurch hopes to be able to continue working with patients and would like to see pharmacists be able to bill and get reimbursed for the patient services they provide. She encourages students to keep an open mind about what kind of pharmacist they want to be. "You never know what career path your degree will open to you, so aim high." ■