

CAPSIL

Spring 2020

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Pharmacy Students and Interns,

Firstly, congratulations to all our 2020 graduates! It may have not been as we had planned, but I know the class of 2020 will go on to create amazing pharmacy spaces as pharmacists. Your resilience and perseverance in an ever-changing climate has been unparalleled.

This issue is a little bit of a throwback, highlighting some of the initiatives hosted by students across Canada for Pharmacist Awareness Month. CAPSI local chapters continue to host and create virtual events across Canada, so be sure to check out your local school's Instagram and Facebook pages for more.

Be sure to check out the most recent winner of the Future of Pharmacy Award winner Elise Colasurdo from UBC on page 8. Her passion for pharmacy is inspiring! Yifan Zhou discusses fee changes in light of COVID-19 and what it means to the profession on page 10. Finally, on page 12 you can read CAPSI's position statement in support of IPSF (International Pharmacy Student Federation) campaign against vaccine hesitancy. With COVID-19 and potential

vaccines becoming available in the near future, advocating for pharmacists as immunizers is a top priority.

June has signaled a month of change in our lives not just across Canada, but around the world. CAPSI stands with those who call out systemic racism, racial injustice, and inequality. June is also Indigenous History Month and Pride Month in Canada. Folks from these communities also experience injustice, oppression and racism. As the most accessible healthcare professionals, we must strive to be accessible and inclusive to our Indigenous, Black, and LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Good luck to everyone, and may we look back at 2020 as a year of change and progress, both in our healthcare spheres, and the world.

Sarah Bento-De Sousa, PharmD
CAPSIL Editor 2019-2020
University of Toronto

President's Address

Dear Canadian pharmacy students and interns,

Congratulations on completing another year of pharmacy school! The end of our semester did not end in the way we expected, however, you rose to the challenge and successfully took another step forward towards our common goal - becoming pharmacists.

I want to give a special congratulations to my colleagues from all 10 pharmacy schools across Canada, the graduating class of 2020. There are some of you I have had the pleasure to meeting throughout my CAPSI journey, and I hope that our next generation of pharmacists will be able to make a difference in the lives of our patients and our healthcare system.

Your graduation and licensure may have been delayed, but I hope you can take this challenge and make it into an opportunity.

The Spring edition of the CAPSIL also marks the end of the CAPSI council year. Your 2019-2020 CAPSI National Council worked hard to empower Canadian pharmacy students to surpass themselves academically and professionally.

CAPSI continuously strives to support our members to excel, become better pharmacists, recognize student initiatives and leaders as well as advocate for issues affecting our profession.

As this is my last Presidential address, I would like to take this moment to voice CAPSI's support of antiracism groups and initiatives. One of CAPSI's core values is unity and CAPSI stands in solidarity with our black pharmacy students and pharmacists, and denounces systemic oppression and structural racism.

As future pharmacists and as the most accessible healthcare professionals, we have an obligation to ensure our BIPOC patients do not feel oppressed and have equitable access to non-discriminatory healthcare. Let's be mindful of our actions and work together to make our healthcare more inclusive and equitable.



As the country slowly starts reopening, please stay safe!

Sincerely,

Jin Kwon

CAPSI National President 2019-2020

Université de Montréal

PharmD

To stay up to date on all CAPSI initiatives, follow us on our social networks!

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BIOGRAPHY

Elisa Colasurdo

Fourth Year - Class of 2021
University of British Columbia

Elise is an amazing and involved member of the Pharmacy community of the University of British Columbia. She is insightful and dedicated to promoting pharmacy and pharmacists throughout a variety of initiatives. Above all, she is a true leader, kind, willing to speak out, and always willing to help others.

CAPSI National is proud to announce Elise as Winter 2020 recipient of the “CAPSI Future of Pharmacy Excellence Award”

Initiatives through school

I've been a dedicated member of the Pharmacy Undergraduate Society (PhUS) at UBC for the past three years. I was elected as VP Social in my first and second year, and elected President going into my third year. As President, I worked to implement a three-year UpToDate subscription at a reduced cost that was tied into pharmacy student undergraduate fees. Throughout the year, I acted as the UpToDate administrator and approved hundreds of accounts

for UBC Pharmacy students. As President, I have had the opportunity to aid in our program's accreditation process and attend the College of Pharmacists of BC Board Meetings as a guest. For the upcoming year, I will be one of my class' fourth year representatives.

Through my leadership elective this past year, I paired with a classmate to launch an initiative titled “Careers Spotlight in Pharmacy”, an online collection of interviews from various pharmacists working in unique pharmacy roles. Our goal was to expose students to a number of different career paths that exist for pharmacists that are not only limited to hospital and community practice. We hope to continue with this initiative throughout our fourth year.

Initiatives outside school

I work at a compounding pharmacy part time during the year. It's located right by Vancouver General Hospital and BC Cancer Agency, so I see a lot of medications you normally wouldn't expect to see in community pharmacies. I work as the non-sterile compounding tech on the weekends and spend my shifts making a variety of suspensions, ointments, creams, hormone syringes and more.

QUESTIONS:

What inspired you to become a pharmacist?

My dad was definitely my biggest inspiration going into pharmacy. He's also a pharmacist and he would come home from work every day telling me about his job. Ever since I was little, I longed to have the same kind of positive effect on people that he had. When I was young, he would take me in to work with him. He would let me make blister packs out of skittles and he taught me basic compounding; I always thought it was the coolest thing.

What is your favourite memory during your pharmacy studies at UBC?

I have a whole archive of amazing memories during my last three years in pharmacy, but I think my favourite has to be winning the National Compounding Competition with my team at PDW 2020!

What do you hope to achieve during your career?

I have a love for community pharmacy and a passion

Do you know a passionate and inspiring Pharmacy student? Nominate them for the Award on our website capsil.ca!

for compounding, so I hope to be able to work as a compounding pharmacist and educate future pharmacists about basic compounding principles. I also hope to pursue leadership opportunities in the profession in order to advocate for the ability for pharmacists to work to their full scope of practice and apply the extensive knowledge that we learn in school.

Any advice for current and incoming students?

Take a step out of your comfort zone! Get involved in a club that interests you, even if it scares you to put yourself out there a little. I was never involved in clubs in high school or undergrad but something told me that pharmacy would be the time and place to do so - and I've never looked back.

Let us know a fun fact about you!

I played the oboe in youth orchestras for seven years! I almost pursued a degree in classical music performance but chose to become a pharmacist instead.

Opinion: Prescription change meant to safeguard supply in COVID-19 crisis triples fees for some patients – What this means to us as a profession –

YIFAN ZHOU, 2T1 University of Toronto

While we are all working hard and risking our safety to be accessible healthcare professionals during this pandemic, an article titled Prescription change meant to safeguard supply in COVID-19 crisis triples fees for some patients was published on CBC. My first response was anger: it disproportionately featured aspects that portrayed pharmacists as profit-seekers, and it was extremely disheartening to read. This powered me through writing a long Facebook post to refute some of its baseless claims.

The article gave readers the false impression that pharmacists are seizing the opportunity to profit from multiple dispensing fees in this time of crisis, and that patients would suffer financially from this. We could all say a million things to refute its claims, so I won't waste the space to talk about it here. The problem is not about our knowledge of the profession; it is the public's.

But what is really the problem?

We're frontline healthcare professionals, but we're often not recognized as such. This article is a sign that there is a knowledge gap between what we do and what the public thinks. If you look at the comments section, it is even more demoraliz-

ing, but it reflects how some people view us as a profession.

So, here are the 'DTPs' for us as a profession – we are underappreciated because we don't speak up, and we're not united.

As Professor Zubin Austin taught us, compared to medical students, pharmacy students tend to avoid conflicts and do not speak up. Out of all the patients, friends and family who had misconceptions of what pharmacists do, how many of them did we clarify those misunderstandings for? Often-times, we just tell ourselves to 'not let it get to you' and move on, but this does not help with the public perception of us.

We're also not very united as a profession. The last paragraph of the CBC article mentioned that although there is a general 30-day supply limit, some pharmacies still offer 90-day supply to their patients. This inconsistency not only encourages patients to shop around for pharmacies, but it also gives the public an excuse to question our true motive behind the 30-day supply limit. How can we advocate for the profession when some of our own are sabotaging it?

What happens when we do speak up?

We need to speak up, and here are two great things that happened when we did. McDonald's was offering free coffee to frontline healthcare professionals, but when a pharmacist asked if we could get them as well, their response was, "sorry, we're only offering it to frontline healthcare professionals." However, they've since changed their policy and included us in the promotion because several pharmacists contacted them to inform them that we are healthcare professions at the frontline of this crisis.

Another example is the very article we're talking about. It was previously titled "'Green light to gouge': Prescription changes due to COVID-19 lead to higher costs". What a biased and misleading title! Many pharmacists flooded the CBC's inbox with emails clarifying the misinformation the article had, and that led to the change of the article's title.

So, what can we do?

We are a part of this professional community, and we should do our part to advocate for it. Voice your opinions! If we don't, no one else will do it for us. Instead of brushing the misconceptions off, we can try to explain it to others – I even had to argue with my mom to make her realize that pharmacists are frontline healthcare professionals.

Along with some classmates, I started a Facebook group called Pharm-COVID-19 Social Media Education Initiative dedicated to sharing COVID-19 information that can educate both us and the public. It is a group held up by all its members, because sharing well-written posts and articles is part of advocating, too.

There are also great community outreach opportunities offered by clubs and CAPSI, especially during Pharmacist Awareness Month: Pharmacy Outreach Days, Kids in Medicine, and Pharmacy Awareness for Geriatrics outreach events. By actively participating in these activities involving people of all age groups, we can slowly change our professional image.

Lastly, most of us by now have realized that our government doesn't appreciate us. The Advisory Council on the implementation of National Pharmacare does not even have a pharmacist on board. We are severely underrepresented in the government. We cannot just hope for someone to miraculously discover our values and make our lives better. We have to fight for that right ourselves. If any of you are considering a career in the government, you have my vote.

The one thing that all pharmacists could agree on, is that we were valued more in the past than we are now. We are constantly being underappreciated, so please, let's not wait until we hit rock bottom before we start doing something.

CONGRATULATIONS AND HAPPY SUMMER FROM CPhA

CPhA is wishing pharmacy students across Canada a happy summer and our sincere congratulations on finishing your current school year amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. We know what a challenge it has been for the entire profession, and we know that so many of you have stepped up to help out. Thank you!

For those of you currently practicing in any capacity, or those of you interested in some summer education, we encourage you to visit our COVID-19 resource page at www.pharmacists.ca/covid19 for a look at the tools, resources, webinar recordings and more that we've developed to support the profession during this time.

We wish you all a safe, happy and healthy summer and best of luck as you begin the next stage of your pharmacy journey.

THANK YOU PHARMACY 



PHARMACISTS AS IMMUNIZERS IN CANADA

BY SOFIYA TEREKHOVSKA AND DANIELLE SHYMANSKI

With the anti-vaccination movement on the rise globally, healthcare systems are faced with an increase in vaccine hesitancy sentiments. Vaccine hesitancy - the voluntary refusal or delay in vaccination despite a vaccine's availability - not only increases the risk of outbreaks in unvaccinated people, but also leads to a deficit in herd immunity (1). While many healthcare professionals play a vital role in vaccination, pharmacists are ideally positioned to distribute, administer and educate about vaccines due to their extensive knowledge and accessibility.

Recently, the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF) released a Declaration on Vaccine Hesitancy, where the Federation listed several calls to action on behalf of pharmacy students and recent graduates, addressing efforts required from pharmaceutical companies, national governments, academic institutions and professional associations.

The Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns (CAPSI) recognizes the growing concern of global vaccine hesitancy and stands in support of the declaration. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the benefits of pharmacist involvement in vaccination in Canada, namely administering vaccinations, improving vaccine-related health literacy and increasing access to vaccination. This pharmacist involvement has contributed to the increase in vaccination rates in Canada. CAPSI hopes that this article can serve as the groundwork for

other IPSF Member Organizations and encourages advocacy for greater pharmacist involvement in vaccination in other countries.

In Canada, patients have expressed support for pharmacist-administered vaccination. In fact, a Canadian study suggests that 80% of influenza vaccine recipients prefer getting their vaccine at pharmacies (2, 3). While numerous factors influence an individual's decision to be vaccinated, access is often a significant obstacle (4-7). In provinces where pharmacists are allowed to administer influenza and other immunizations, there is a higher uptake of immunizations by the general public (8).

Authorizing community pharmacists to administer vaccines could help overcome issues with accessibility given the ubiquitous distribution of pharmacies, extended working hours and walk-in policies (3, 9, 10). Furthermore, the accessibility of pharmacists in medically underserved areas has been shown to improve immunization rates. Another potential benefit is the avoidance of encountering infectious individuals in clinic waiting rooms when seeking preventative health measures (11). In addition to improving overall vaccination rates, pharmacists as administrators of vaccines could help to improve vaccination rates among hard-to-reach populations, such as young adults with no primary care physician (12).

Improving immunization rates is known to reduce the burden of vaccine-preventable diseases in adults. Additionally, vaccinations lessen

healthcare associated costs of vaccine-preventable diseases via reduced incidence rates and disease related complications (13-15). From an economic standpoint, a recent study done in the Canadian province of Ontario shows that implementation of the Pharmacy Based Immunization Services resulted in savings up to \$2.3 million CAD. These savings were a result of preventing indirect healthcare costs and lost productivity since flexible pharmacy hours accommodate work days and immunizations reduce sick leave (16).

In addition to administering vaccinations, pharmacists are ideally positioned to educate their patients regarding vaccinations, and thus to counteract vaccine hesitancy among the general public. Pharmacists receive education regarding health, medications and immunizations in an accredited university pharmacy program, typically ranging four to five years following prerequisite courses. Numerous studies have demonstrated that pharmacist consultations result in higher immunization rates, including pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations (17-18). Evidently, pharmacist involvement as the educator has the potential not only to increase immunization rates, but to also change the public's view of vaccines and help dissipate vaccine-related myths.

While not all countries have an existing legislative framework that allows pharmacists to contribute to immunizations, there are numerous benefits of pharmacy-based vaccination services. Pharmacists are ideally positioned to be involved in immunization of the public due to their extensive knowledge and accessibility. Allowing pharmacists to be involved in immunization - whether as administrators or educators - has the potential to increase immunization rates, save healthcare costs, as well as counteract the anti-vaccination movement. After all, the aforementioned evidence is strongly supportive of putting immunization services into the hands of highly accessible and trusted healthcare providers.

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PHARMACISTS, PERCEPTIONS, AND THE PANDEMIC

Mariana Pozdirica, Class of 2021,
University of Manitoba

When I tell people, I'm studying to be a pharmacist, I get a vast assortment of responses, ranging from the joking but inappropriate ("So, when you're a pharmacist, you can get me some of the good stuff, eh?") to the well-meaning yet uninformed ("Why would you want to count pills for the rest of your life?")

These comments typically result in a short discussion that culminates in me talking about all the behind-the-counter work that goes into checking and filling prescriptions ("Pharmacists really do more than count pills"). Ultimately, these conversations display a default of misconceptions and false assumptions the public has about pharmacists. This default has also been widely demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic as healthcare professionals have become the topic of public discussion.

Pharmacists aren't usually in the media. Short of a few articles during Pharmacists Appreciation (or Awareness) Month, we haven't been part of many media stories. Frankly, most healthcare providers haven't been in mainstream media stories in the same way, but COVID-19 has put us all in a spotlight. And

once we were getting some attention, whether it be due to proactive measures to ensure all patients get enough medication for as long as possible or asking patients not to come to the pharmacy if they're sick, it was often with misbalance, limited background research, and short-sighted conclusions that seem to be built upon this default of misconceptions.

This feeling oddly felt familiar. I've worked in politics for 3.5 years. While the media do their best to accurately share information and bring light to valuable perspectives (and should be thanked for all their hard work especially in a pandemic), there are many times I've read articles that don't show the full picture of all I know went into making some decision or planning some initiative. We all face the limitations that come with having someone else write your story. But there are things we try to do to ensure articles are written from an informed perspective, even if that final decision is disagreed with.

Last time I wrote for CAPSIL (Fall 2019), I focused on what the field of politics can learn from how pharmacists explain the why behind the importance of taking one's medication properly. This time, I want to do the reverse. Straddling these two fields continually exposes broader lessons cross-trans-

ferrable from one field to the other despite the many differences. I think approaching the default of misconceptions and false assumptions is one of those cross-transferrable skills, and I've seen, to my delight, some pharmacists stepping up to use these skills to combat misbalance already.

Point Out Missed Facts

When major perspectives or facts are omitted from media articles, they're omitted from public discussion and invalidated from relevance, making it more difficult to garner attention to or even prove them later. Emailing reporters and editors should be a step we all take when an article about our profession or the areas we're experts in lacks important information or worse, sparks falsehoods among the public (like the notion of pharmacists gouging prices to make profits from steps meant only to ensure every patient gets their medications without disruption). I've been inspired to see many pharmacists dispel misconceptions with emails to editors and reporters, as well as comment on them publicly through social media. This has been powerful, and I hope it continues after the pandemic too.

Articles won't get deleted, but their headlines may change (and bear in mind

some people only read the headline), critical facts may be added, and future articles may be written with a more well-rounded perspective. I've seen each of these things happen during this pandemic after pharmacists stepped up to point out missed facts.

Make Connections

An email to a reporter or editor is helpful, but these are also valuable ways to offer opportunities that help form more informed perspectives in the future to those writing these far-reaching articles. Offer to be someone who can provide an insightful quote when an article about pharmacy is being written. Commend and share the stories that are well-written, well-informed, and well-rounded.

Always Be Ready

A politician going into public (where they may be asked about specific ongoing issues) without some version of a statement in their minds is like leaving your home without your phone. It's important to prepare for the unexpected as pharmacists too whether it be a question from a patient (responses easily get passed through word of mouth, "Well my pharmacist said...") or a family member (who may say to others, "Well my niece/grandson/

cousin is a pharmacist and said...") or a question from someone in the media. There are many topics and issues in pharmacy, ranging from drug shortages to pharmacy services. During this pandemic, we've also seen issues of personal protective equipment supplies and of the perceptions around pharmacists as retailers rather than healthcare professionals.

When we think of these things, which we should, we also need to think of the clear, concise message we would put forward if asked. Helpful analogies, original yet consistent perspectives, and thoughtful explanations are important to mentally draft and share when we work in a field facing a default of misconceptions. I've also seen too many one-liners focus on terms like "drug supply chains" and "stockpiling" that are so familiar to us that we don't realize the public may feel detached from them ("how am I stockpiling blood pressure meds if I still need every one of those pills?"). Statements aren't supposed to always be technical. They're supposed to make sense.

Write the Narrative

One of the most valuable tools a politician has is their own social media, blog, or column in the local newspaper. Expecting a reporter to get your story absolutely right is

unrealistic. Frankly, it may even be contrary to their responsibility to share the impacts others are feeling from well-meaning decisions. No one is ever going to offer a full perspective of what's behind the counter other than pharmacy professionals. So, write an editorial, submit a letter to the editor, post on social media, start a blog. In all things, stay professional (and have a good headshot).

Pharmacists work such busy jobs doing so many things already. Frankly, this article itself may seem ignorant and insensitive to suggest pharmacists should also be writing articles, thinking of mental statements, and doing constant fact-checking. The reality, though, is that public perception is both impacted by the media and displayed through the media (just read a few of the comments on some recent articles if you're a brave soul). It isn't easy to address these perceptions and it isn't even always going to work but ignoring this or thinking someone else should do it entrenches the default of misconceptions. The beauty of it is that each of us doesn't need to do everything, but if we all do whatever we can, hopefully the students thinking of entering pharmacy are no longer asked why they'd want to waste their life counting pills.



PHARMACIST AWARENESS MONTH



University of Waterloo: Finding Your Niche in Pharmacy

Pharmacy Awareness Month was started off on March 1st with the annual OPA Cup, a hockey game between UW and UofT Pharmacy. Unfortunately UW did not hold onto our winning streak - but we all still had a great time! March 2nd brought the PAM Kickoff Breakfast with many students, staff and faculty in attendance. A huge thank you to UW Pharmacy Faculty for sponsoring our delicious breakfast! We enjoyed speeches and words of encouragement from our Dean, Dave Edwards, OPA Executive Vice President and Chief Pharmacy Officer, Allan Malek, and our CAPSI PAM Chair Mara Faggioni.

Each Monday in March we held social media contests (identify the pill, how many tablets in the jar) and each week a winner was drawn for a gift card of their choosing. Each Friday featured posts spotlighting pharmacists working in niche roles within the field of pharmacy. CAPSI also offered free professional headshots to all students who were interested. March 11th CAPSI and OPA hosted a dinner and learn catered by Vincenzo's titled "A Pharmacist's

Role in Women's Health". Thank you to Nardine Nakhla for an amazing event and sharing your insights with us. At the end of the event, a "weekly manicure" pass was drawn courtesy of July Nail Bar. RxPRN and SOPhS Athletics partnered up to deliver mental and physical health events throughout PAM. Meditation Monday became a quick favourite and March 12th a local yoga studio Big Bliss opened their doors to pharmacy students for a free class.

With the unfortunate turn of events due to COVID-19, many in person events were cancelled such as our Multiple Sclerosis IPE event, Smoking Cessation Lunch and Learn, Women's Cancer IPE event, Mock OSCEs and Family Pheud. We are going to be doing our best to host these events virtually (where possible) in the Spring term.

Our PAM Chair Mara Faggioni was featured on CTV News to promote the role of pharmacists to our community! Check out the video here:

https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1918087&fbclid=IwAR2bmsFI5vQw9EWeZKzALSU6v5BD_uUhtZ2Qs1t75S_IILLsILvCQ9JYCKo



University Of Alberta: PAMdemic

Pharmacist Awareness Month at University of Alberta has always been jam packed. This year we continued our efforts of advocacy for the profession alongside the Alberta Pharmacy Students' Association, Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Alberta College of Pharmacy, Alberta Pharmacists' Association and the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists. We kicked off the month with our tradition - Tacos in a Bag. We handed out free taco in a bag to all our members and provided them with pharmacy pins!

Despite the PAMdemic, we were able to host 3 lunch and learns. The topics included a multiple sclerosis interprofessional panel, diabetes management and indigenous health. We were also able to hold two public outreach clinics about Diabetes and Lung Health. Our students also attended 3 various junior highs and high school in Edmonton to educate students on various topics including the Role of the Pharmacist, Antimicrobial Stewardship and Sun Safety.

When things switched to online, our PAM committee moved fast to move our initiatives online. We hosted an online Pharmafacts through our instagram account. We also hosted an infographic challenge. The aim of this challenge was to create easy-to-read, informative infographics that members of the public could use to better their health and become more informed. We also wanted to increase our members' knowledge in the topics of their choosing, and help them improve their graphic and technical skills. Overall, the infographic challenge was a success as it got students involved, promoted health, educated the public, and provided further professional development to our members. The submitted infographics were later posted on our local advocacy body's (RxA) page called "Member 2 Member Resource Sharing" which enabled pharmacists to print off and use the infographics in their own pharmacy.



University Of Saskatchewan: Better Together

Pharmacist Awareness Month (PAM) was off to a great start at the University of Saskatchewan, where they hosted the annual PAM Kick-Off. Special guests, the Dean and Acting Associate Dean Academic of the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition were in attendance. Colleagues in nutrition were invited to kick off Nutrition Month as well (picture of ribbon cutting and the CAPSI reps at the ribbon cutting)

The next event they hosted was an interprofessional case study event. This was an open-format case study that brought together multiple health professionals. Students from all Health Science colleges at the U of S were in attendance. The case study focused on Multiple Sclerosis (MS). The panel was composed of a physiatrist, neurophysiotherapist, a pharmacist, and an MS Program Nurse who discussed the case and how they would approach situations while treating MS. (attached picture of panel) Our panelists discussed how essential teamwork is when it comes to treating MS. They described the process of when a patient enters the MS program in Saskatchewan and how each member of the team plays a fundamental role in ensuring the best care for the patient. There were many thought-provoking questions for the panel and lots of discussion about why Saskatchewan has the highest prevalence of MS in the world.

Lastly, our PAM promotions committee held a pill drop at Market Mall in Saskatoon where we raised awareness about safe disposal of medications! (picture of Marlowe Armstrong at the pill drive) We wish we could have continued with our PAM activities in person, but due to circumstances, we did our best to share PAM initiatives over Instagram and Facebook.



University Of Manitoba : A Pam To Be Remembered



As is a common thread since March, the effects of COVID-19 added an element of surprise to this year's lineup of PAM events. The unprecedented changes that occurred during PAM 2020 stand as a testament to the strength and resilience of our student body.

Wellness

A central theme to PAM this year was wellness. A wellness tree encouraged students and faculty to write down what wellness means to them, and weekly wellness challenges promoted self-care strategies. Adapting to our new virtual PAM, two phenomenal pharmacists, Kelly Yeo and Tim Smith shared their insights on recognizing and responding to burnout. Click here to read their interviews.

Interprofessional and Community Outreach

We were thrilled to host three large outreach events at the beginning of March. On March 4, 80 female high school students came together for an interprofessional panel organized by CAPSI Manitoba at a local high school. Over 500 students and family members joined us at the CanU Family Festival; attendees were able to learn about pharmacy school, what pharmacists do, and partake in pharmacy-related activities. In the same vein, a PAM booth allowed pharmacy students to engage with other Rady

Faculty of Health Science students on the current and expanding role of Pharmacists, while fundraising for the Rainbow Resource Centre.

Apothecary

A phenomenal part of PAM 2020 was the inaugural issue of the Apothecary! The launch of this student-produced magazine is a fantastic culmination of this year's modified PAM. The goal of the Apothecary was to provide an accessible vessel for all students to celebrate where the profession of pharmacy is today, where it's going, and how they can find their place in contributing to it. Click here to visit several leadership profiles from Canadian pharmacists, including CPhA Chair, Christine Hrudka, a collation of the wellness resources, as well as many tried and true recipes from faculty and students.

Despite COVID-19, PAM 2020 was unique and will be one to be remembered - and celebrated.



Pharmacy Students Helping with COVID-19 Screening

Several students helped with COVID-19 screening; here is Stephanie Bansee's recollection of the experience. To me, it's essential to continue to support patients outside of the pharmacy during these times. As a future healthcare professional, I feel that it is my duty to serve my community and try to reduce the stress on the healthcare system. Volunteering at a drive-thru testing site allows me to assess over 100 patients a day on their symptoms, explain to them about the COVID-19 test, and how they can access their results. Having patient interaction during this pandemic allows me to listen to a patient's worries, concerns, and provide them with comfort and support. I can also lessen the burden on other healthcare workers, allowing them to focus on the essential collection and testing procedures. Volunteering has shown me the impact COVID-19 has had on our community while giving me an experience that keeps me connected to patients.

Pharmacy Students helping Pharmacists

Alongside Pharmacists Manitoba, students at the College of Pharmacy are helping to lessen the stress that pharmacists are facing right now by providing pharmacists with a network of student volunteers who are ready to help with grocery runs, babysit-

ting, pet-sitting, or gardening. This initiative is a great way to stay connected within our pharmacy community while also being able to help in the small ways we know possible. We want to thank all pharmacists and pharmacy team members who are at the front line, tirelessly working around the clock to provide care to patients. Coordinators: Justine Reyes, Mariam Guindi, Jessie McTaggart

Working at a Community Pharmacy during COVID-19

Working in the middle of a pandemic reminds me of my past. Born in Canada but raised in Hong Kong, the SARS pandemic struck in 2003, when I was a young child. The city spent a hundred days in the pandemic, and the virus took 300 lives in Hong Kong. It seems that what we've seen also happened at home – the empty streets, the panic buying, the constant stream of tragic news, the people seeking hope when it was scarce. I would've never imagined that a pandemic like this would return on a global scale. I would not have pictured myself working as a healthcare provider in the middle of such a pandemic.

Story by Phinehas Cheung





Memorial University of Newfoundland: Lighting up Innovation

This year brought about many difficulties when planning and carrying out Pharmacist Awareness Month (PAM) activities. However, it also gave us the opportunity as a school to overcome these setbacks with innovative new ideas. I have never been so proud to be a Memorial student as I was when I watched the students rise to the occasion and continue to spread awareness and advocate despite the challenging circumstances.

Prior to the closures due to COVID-19, we filled the first two weeks of March with numerous in person events. We began with a Kickoff Event that had a photo booth and a presentation outlining what people could look forward to throughout the month. That was followed by PAMcake day, a bake sale, a feminine hygiene drive to support the Women's Center, a health fair, and a LGBTQ+ awareness lunch and learn all within the first week. The second week consisted of a Wellness Movie Night, a Cannabis lunch and learn, and the pill drop at the Medication Therapy Services clinic. Dispersed throughout these two weeks, we also offered 4 lip gloss compounding events for the local girl guide and sparks groups as well as 9 school presentations throughout St. John's and the surrounding towns.

Following the prohibition of all in person gatherings, it was time to get creative with our advocacy. We managed to switch our approach to an online platform and kept people involved through our Facebook page "MUN Pharmacist Awareness Month 2020" and using our hashtag "#20MUNPAM20". We had students and faculty members do Facebook, Instagram and Twitter takeovers in which they offered advice for dealing with the pandemic and adjusting to taking online classes. We also organized social media contests, which were a success. To end the month, we "lit up" PAM by arranging for the Government House in St John's to glow green in recognition of PAM and to thank Pharmacists for all their hard work on the front lines during the COVID-19 crisis.

Although Pharmacist Awareness Month did not go exactly how we had planned, I think we were successful in bringing awareness to all that Pharmacists do and celebrating our profession in a time when our role as front line health care providers became even more crucial. I am proud of all of those who helped make PAM the success it was and look forward to continuing this important tradition in the future.



University of Toronto: What Does Pharmacy Mean to You?

As March comes to an end, it is hard not to think about how different this Pharmacist Awareness Month (PAM) has been in comparison to previous years. While we may not have been able to celebrate PAM with each other throughout the entirety of March in the way that we had planned, there was certainly a lot of pride in the pharmacy community this month. We are inspired and proud of the actions we have seen from practicing pharmacists and from you, our fellow pharmacy students, amidst this pandemic. Whether it be through encouraging proper social distancing, making it a point to share accurate COVID-19 information online, informing your friends and family about how to get their medications during this time, or taking on more shifts at the pharmacy, we have all contributed to raising awareness about the role pharmacists play in our healthcare system, and this is what PAM is all about.

To start off PAM, CAPSI and UPS hosted our second PAMBurgers Kickoff! Our newly appointed Dean, Lisa Dolovich joined us for the ceremonious ribbon cutting ceremony, with Allan Malek (Executive Vice-President and Chief Pharmacy Officer of the Ontario Pharmacists Association) and Nancy Lum-Wilson (Registrar and CEO of the Ontario College of Pharmacists) present to motivate students to advocate for the profession of pharmacy. We were also fortunate to have booths hosted by the OPA committee and EVOLVE, which educated students on pharmacy advocacy efforts and expanded scope, respectively.

The focus of this year's outreach initiatives was for students to educate the community on the role of the pharmacist and show how pharmacists play an important role in managing patient health. We hosted two main outreach initiatives:

1. Pharmacy Outreach Days (PODs): Pharmacy students ran educational booths at local pharmacies which educated patients on topics such as osteoporosis, diabetes, naloxone, blood pressure, and travel medicine. We were also excited to add a new topic this year – Asthma, with an emphasis on proper inhaler technique!
2. Kids in Medicine (KIM): Pharmacy students ran presentations on handwashing, allergies, and the dangers of smoking at Toronto elementary schools. Sexual health presentations at high schools were also offered, and our KIM subcommittee even developed a new presentation on Flu season, which we will be able to use in future years!

We also loved hearing your answers to the question "What does pharmacy mean to you?" throughout the month. We hope you continue to use this enthusiasm to advocate for our profession and raise awareness about pharmacy, beyond Pharmacist Awareness Month.

Each year the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF) runs a public health campaign during PAM! This year we were raising awareness for Diabetes and Healthy Living. In collaboration with the Pharmacy Muslim Student Association (PhaM-SA) we had the unique opportunity to host an online speaker series about diabetes management during Ramadan. At this event we had the pleasure to hear from a local pharmacist and nutritionist who taught us how we can help support patients who fast during Ramadan. In particular, we learned about various healthy meal options and strategies to tailor medication and lifestyle management to each individual patient. We also ran an online health campaign where we gave students resources on how to maintain their physical and mental health while still practicing social distancing. We also asked students to contribute ideas on ways they work towards improving their physical/mental well-being while staying at home! Despite moving many of our activities to an online platform, we still learned a lot about helping patients with their diabetes management and promoting a general healthy lifestyle!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this year's Pharmacist Awareness Month campaign by helping us with promotion, attending events, participating in our online initiatives, and planning in the months leading up to March. Several students from a diverse group of pharmacy clubs have been hard at work over the last few months planning for UoT's PAM campaign. While we were not able to execute our PAM campaign in its entirety, it was amazing to witness the hard work and unity of so many students and clubs. A special shout-out to all our PAM outreach volunteers and subcommittee members – with your help, we were able to expand on our existing outreach initiatives! All of the planning efforts that went into this year's PAM will continue to make a huge impact for years to come!



