



UNIVERSITY POINT OF CONTACT NEWSLETTER

**A publication of the U. S. Public Health Service (USPHS)
Commissioned Corps Pharmacists Professional Advisory
Committee (PharmPAC) University Point of Contact (UPOC)**

Inside this issue Fall/Winter 2022:

Editor's Note	<u>2</u>
Experience at Cherokee Nation Outpatient Health Center	<u>6</u>
Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin' in Oklahoma	<u>16</u>
Versatility of a Pharmacist within the FDA	<u>21</u>
APPE Rotation at the Catawba Service Unit	<u>30</u>
The Phoenix Experience: JRCOSTEP Externship	<u>38</u>
USPHS Commissioned Corps Pharmacy Information	<u>50</u>
UPOC Team	<u>54</u>

Pharmacists Advancing Public Health

Submitted by LCDR Quynh Anh Tran and LCDR Josephine Zepeda

For many of us, pharmacy school is a fond memory of the past, a cherished part our lives that marked the beginning of our pharmacy endeavor. Now that we are practicing pharmacists, buried in our daily duties and responsibilities, it can easily derail our passion and zest for achieving the public health goals that we once had. A visit to Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy at Texas A & M University has reinvigorated and refreshed our focus of advancing and continuously expanding public health initiatives, as well as patient safety, in the pharmacy community. Through the 2022 USPHS Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award event, LCDR Zepeda and I had the opportunity to present the award to Dr. Joy Alonzo, who was accepting on behalf of Dr. Alexis Speer, as she was unable to attend the Awards Banquet Ceremony on May 20, 2022. We were reminded of the inherent zealousness and dedication of the pharmacy profession, represented by professors and faculty members who devoted their careers to developing and fostering future generation of exceptional pharmacists.

Being able to participate in such event, and to represent the faces of the USPHS Commissioned Corp, was truly an indescribable experience. As we approached the award event, we were initially welcomed by Ms. Sharon LeMieux, the Administrative Coordinator of the Deans Office, who briefed us on the tradition and celebration of the Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy Annual Banquet Award. We were also greeted by many other exceptional pharmacy leaders from the university, and among those were Dr. Indra K. Reddy, founding



(Left to Right) LCDR Quynh Anh Tran, LCDR Josephine Zepeda, Dr. Joy Alonzo, Dr. Indra K. Reddy.

Pharmacists Continuously Advancing... continued from [page 1](#)

Dean, and Dr. Joy Alonzo, clinical professor and nominator of the award. The award banquet ceremony was created as an opportunity for faculty members, preceptors, students, and community representatives to come together in celebration and to recognize those who have achieved outstanding accomplishments and significant impacts within the community. We were astounded by the many significant achievements and impacts that the students and faculty members have contributed to advancing the profession. Some of the projects that the staff and students were recognized for include GlaxoSmithKline Patient Care Award, HEB Guiding Principles Award, Irma Lerma Rangel Leadership Award, Kleberg Bank Community Service Award, Pharmcare USA Integrated Pharmacotherapy (IPT) Award, Walgreens Innovative Community Practice Award, among many other awards.

We also took this unique opportunity to talk about USPHS, the different agencies that we work for, and specifically our jobs at IHSC serving vulnerable and underserved communities through addressing public health issues. We spoke about different clinical and administrative opportunities available for pharmacists with USPHS. This opportunity opened the door for us to recruit for USPHS and our agencies. Nevertheless, this experience reminded us that our colleagues are continuously working towards improving and advancing healthcare at the most fundamental level – shaping and molding the future pharmacy leaders. As pharmacists, we are in great positions to bridge the gaps of health disparities, quality, and accessibility, through a multitude of avenues, including teaching, new drug research, outreach services, public health pilot projects, medication therapy management, and so many more.

The USPHS Excellence in Public Health Award Program serves as a vital platform for USPHS pharmacists to connect and support community partners in the promotion and advancement of public health.



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Irma Lerma Rangel
College of Pharmacy

Editor's Note:

The UPOC newsletter team is pleased to announce the Winter 2022 issue. Our goal is to provide the highest quality and most relevant USPHS information applicable to student interests.

As Editor-In-Chief, I continue to look forward to welcoming new ideas, showcasing informative articles relevant to your interests and to providing a well-rounded insight on what it's like to be a PHS pharmacy officer.

We thank those students and pharmacists who submitted articles and willingly shared their experiences about their rotation/or pharmacy practice site, unique service or residency experience. Your reflections and stories give our readers a glimpse of the diverse opportunities the PHS offers.

We hope you find this edition enlightening and informative. This issue features a collection of pharmacy student experiences and officers in action from various duty stations. Students, we wish you the best of luck in school and your career endeavors!

Best wishes on your success,

LCDR Brett Whitehead, PharmD, BCPS, CDCES, BC-ADM



Fall/Winter 2022

The Cherokee Nation Pharmacy Experience

Submitted by Ms. Abigail Thibodeaux, LCDR Alena Korbut, LCDR Tony Ben Gustin, CAPT James Chapple

As a pharmacy student at the Cherokee Nation Outpatient Health Center in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, there are many opportunities to advance your skills and knowledge in ambulatory care. Each week has a set schedule for time spent hands-on learning in the anticoagulation and diabetes clinics, along with time to advance clinical knowledge with discussions, presentations, and journal club. The site's designated preceptor is Dr. James Chapple, a USPHS Captain and Director of Pharmacy Clinical Services. Alongside Dr. Chapple is an array of USPHS officers and civil servants who are extremely skillful in the complex ambulatory care setting, most of whom we have been able to learn from during this rotation. In the short time that I have been here, patient advocacy has proven to be a large part of the healthcare initiative at the Cherokee Nation. Pharmacists at the Cherokee Nation keep a focused multi-faceted approach to healthcare, looking at the whole patient and not just one disease state or medication. Diabetic patients in the clinic are also evaluated for hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and other pertinent disease states or risk factors that contribute to their health and wellness. The diabetes clinic is structured in a way that patients see only the same two pharmacists at their visits, giving them the chance to build trust in familiarity. The pharmacists at this site show us the importance of patient education and communication for maintaining rapport. As students, we are directly involved with patient care, creating recommendations and chart notes with each patient review and gaining experience presenting patients to other healthcare professionals. Students also conduct the anticoagulation clinic visits during this rotation, which is a very hands-on experience where students become skilled in drawing blood, testing INRs, and making pharmacotherapy adjustments on a case-by-case basis under the supervision of a pharmacist.

Pharmacist David Elliott emphasizes the importance of learning something new each day, and this has proven true from learning to teach diabetic patients how to adjust their basal insulin dose to learning what questions to ask patients who come in with a low INR. This rotation site offers many perspectives on how to provide exceptional patient care to optimize health outcomes and results in the ambulatory clinic care setting. As Dr. Chapple says, "nothing is off limits" for learning. Students are able to rotate through clinics and different parts of the pharmacy, focusing on



Pharmacy student Lauren Chastain, Captain James Chapple PharmD, LCDR Tony Ben Gustin PharmD, LCDR Alena Korbut PharmD, Pharmacy student Abigail Thibodeaux

Continued on [Page 41](#)

It's Not the Weather That Stops You, It's the Gear

Submitted by Joshua Mottet, Pharm.D. Candidate 2023, St. Louis College of Pharmacy

Preceptor: CAPT Anne Marie Bott, Pharm.D., BCOP, BCPS

Prior to pharmacy school, I worked as a pharmacy technician for 12 years. Initially I worked in retail pharmacy for the first 4 years, then I specialized in inpatient oncology for the last 8 years. While I have always lived and worked in St. Louis and love my hometown, I also really enjoy traveling. In 2001, my family and I took a road trip from St. Louis to Alaska. It was a very long drive, but the natural beauty of this state was well worth it. When it was time to select Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPEs) in my final didactic year of pharmacy school, it was a no brainer that I would apply for a rotation with the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC). To my surprise, I was selected and provided this amazing opportunity to come back to Alaska for 5 weeks to work in an oncology setting. I always knew that I would come back to Alaska, I just did not think that it would have been to further my education.

This oncology rotation was an amazing experience. It allowed me to develop a better understanding of oncology in clinical practice. Oncology is constantly changing with advances in research, testing and the development of new medications or approved indications. During the rotation I had a wide variety of responsibilities; I presented multiple topic discussions on tumor lysis syndrome, febrile neutropenia, extravasation, chemotherapy-induced nausea/vomiting, breast cancer, leukemia, lung cancer and colorectal cancer. I had the opportunity to work on projects that I had little previous exposure to, such as a drug monograph for formulary addition, and articles for the Alaska Pharmacists Association. I attended weekly tumor board meetings, journal club discussions, monthly P&T committee meetings and a PharmPAC meeting. I performed daily tasks of medication order review and medication counseling via chair-side over the medications that the patient went home with related to their chemotherapy. We discussed use, side effects, potential drug interactions and any special instructions. Medication counseling was my favorite daily task; once the patients learned I was from Missouri, they explained what it's like living in Alaska and where I should plan weekend trips, along with recommendations on activities.

While not on rotation, I spent plenty of time outside hiking and exploring. The month of August was pretty rainy in Anchorage. When I first arrived I was told "The weather does not stop an Alaskan, their gear does" – CAPT Anne Marie Bott. The following day I went to an outdoor sporting goods store and bought a rain jacket and a pair of hiking shoes. Now I was unstoppable, hiking trails around town rain or shine. On the weekends I explored Girdwood, Seward and Denali. In Seward I went on a small group boat tour from Resurrection Bay, venturing into the Kenai Fjords National Park, seeing amazing views of



Josh at Yanert Glacier, Denali, AK

Fall/Winter 2022

Leading On the Front Lines of the COVID-19 Vaccination Response

Submitted by CDR Victoria Ferretti-Aceto, Pharm.D.

Recognized for her motivating leadership and innovative approach to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, May Thandar was presented with the USPHS Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award on April 7, 2022 by CDR Vicky Ferretti-Aceto. The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most pressing public health challenge of our time, ranking as the third-leading cause of deaths in the U.S. behind heart disease and cancer. Fortunately, COVID-19 vaccines became available in December of 2020. With an already battle-weary healthcare delivery system, the Nation urgently needed new strategies as the race to vaccinate people, save lives, and end the pandemic was underway. Access to vaccines expanded and the need for more vaccination sites increased, but the greatest need was for more vaccinators to get shots into people's arms. May's efforts involved leading on the front lines by setting up community vaccination clinics and by coordinating and organizing students, faculty and alumni volunteers to vaccinate. She communicated directly with local pharmacies to learn what their needs were for support. By making sure that pharmacies and community clinics had adequate staff to vaccinate people, over 4,000 COVID-19 vaccines and over 1,400 influenza vaccines were administered at senior and community centers and at local pharmacies throughout the Buffalo, NY region and across the university's three campuses by the end of the Fall 2021 semester. When asked what her future goals are, May said that during her P4 year, she hopes to explore various fields of pharmacy and gain as many experiences as possible, including a 6-week APPE rotation at the CDC Drug Service department. After graduation, she is interested in completing post-graduate training and working in a field where she can incorporate and utilize both public health and pharmacy knowledge and skills. May is a student at the University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and is working on both her Doctor of Pharmacy and Master's of Public Health degrees. She will graduate in May 2023.



CDR Victoria Ferretti-Aceto with May Thandar

My Rotation Experience at Cherokee Nation Outpatient Health Center

*Submitted by: Ms. Lauren Chastain, PharmD Candidate 2022, Southwestern Oklahoma State University College of Pharmacy
Preceptors: CAPT James Chapple, LCDR Alena Korbut, LCDR T. Ben Gustin*

My experience as a pharmacy student at the Cherokee Nation Outpatient Health Center (CNOHC) in Tahlequah, Oklahoma has been not only educational, but also extremely beneficial to my future career as a pharmacist. The healthcare providers and staff members at CNOHC provide the highest quality of care to every patient. Improving health outcomes and enhancing the quality of life for Native Americans is at the forefront of this facility's core values. The dedication to serve is evident as the Cherokee Nation is continuously expanding the services they offer and staying up to date with the most current healthcare treatments available.

CNOHC has served as my Ambulatory Care Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE). This site has provided me with an opportunity to gain clinical knowledge and skills in the management of patients in an ambulatory care setting. The pharmacists here are very passionate about the health of their patients and take pride in developing a safe, trusting relationship that fosters improved outcomes and better patient participation. The relationships between the pharmacists and patients at this facility are like family. They are always encouraging their patients to call or come by and genuinely care about them. The two clinics that pharmacists manage here are the Anticoagulation Clinic (ACC) and the Intensive Diabetes Management Services (IDMS) clinic. I have had an opportunity to work in both clinics where we check INRs and adjust warfarin doses in the ACC clinic, and visit with patients and discuss lifestyle modifications and the importance of medication adherence in the IDMS clinic. Shared decision-making is of utmost importance in both clinics and

pharmacists are always willing to take into consideration the autonomy of their patients. Other activities at this site have included a disease state management presentation, journal club, and some topic discussions on penicillin skin testing, infectious disease pharmacy, and antimicrobial stewardship.

The atmosphere at CNOHC is very welcoming and encouraging, which helps promote a better learning environment. Each pharmacist I have had the pleasure of working with has provided me with new knowledge and a new perspective on ways I can best care



APPE student, Lauren Chastain, checking a patient's INR in the Anticoagulation Clinic at CNOHC

CMS Rotation Reflection: A Once in a Lifetime Opportunity

Submitted by: Christina Rivera PharmD Candidate 2022

Preceptor: CDR Jerry Zee, PharmD MPH CPH

In the months of April and May 2022, I had the pleasure of doing a rotation at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) New York Regional Office (NYRO). I learned what kind of roles pharmacists can perform in a regulatory setting. I also had numerous opportunities to attend training courses that have improved my personal and professional life. I observed Medicare Part C and D program audits led by pharmacists, and witnessed how CMS ensured Medicare beneficiaries had adequate access to critical therapies and coverage to high quality healthcare.

I participated in training sessions that taught me how to provide critical healthcare services to underserved populations like the transgender population and the Hepatitis B and C patient population. Considerations in these patient populations were not taught at my pharmacy school, and I was grateful to learn about them during this rotation. Taking the information and sharing it with others in our field will make a major difference when serving these populations. Most of the training came in a series, so the information was not rushed into a 1-hour time period. I learned about different styles of approaching proper care for these patients over 4 weeks. Repetition of the training material, as it was consistently recurring, was a good way for me to absorb the information long term.

The most memorable part of this rotation was the focus on mental health. Since 2020, the year that the COVID-19 pandemic began, I personally experienced a lot of stress and burnout due to school, work, and then rotations. The CMS Office of Program Operations and Local Engagement (OPOLE) had two meetings which I attended. Both of the meetings included presentations which focused on resilience. The presentations focused on self-care, which was meaningful to me and others at CMS, but also to the public. Everyone can and does experience stress in some capacity, particularly during the pandemic. It is crucial to acknowledge that and learn how to decompress on a regular basis. It is so easy to just focus on the negatives of our lives. The presenters demonstrated the benefits of self-care and different methods of self-care, some of which I have come to use often. Other major focuses within CMS were racial inequity and social determinants of health. I enjoyed everything that I learned within CMS because I know I wouldn't have gotten this experience at any other rotation site. It was refreshing to have a rotation not be completely



Christina Rivera, Pharmacy Student

about strict schedules, and numerous meetings that I am not interested in, and are not necessary for my future career. This was a perfect way for me to end my year of pharmacy rotations. Overall, I enjoyed my time at CMS, and I would recommend to any pharmacy student who is able to rotate at CMS to take that opportunity.



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Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience at FCC Butner, NC

Submitted by: LT Pamela Reid, PharmD and LT Frances D. Chinea-Perez, PharmD

Preceptors: LCDR Kristen Konosky, CDR Joshua Valgardson, Edited by: CDR Joshua Valgardson and LCDR Neha Patel

In February 2021, our Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) at the Federal Correctional Complex (FCC) Butner began. We were uncertain of what to expect from a rotation in a correctional care setting. Nonetheless, we were both filled with much excitement and eagerness to learn. After arriving at the complex, we walked through the metal detectors and greeted our preceptor who escorted us to the central pharmacy to meet the rest of the team. The pharmacy team consisted of 8 technicians and 16 USPHS pharmacists with various backgrounds, who were all happy to mentor us and share their career experiences.

FCC Butner is one of the largest male medical institutions in the BOP that houses over 5,000 inmates with varying medical conditions. Therefore, there was never a dull day in the pharmacy as we built tangible skills in adjunct to the knowledge acquired through our didactic education. While working in the central pharmacy, pharmacists challenged us with questions to gauge the depth of our clinical knowledge. In between clinics, we were assigned to deliver topic discussions ranging from antimicrobial stewardship to clinical practice guideline updates.

In addition, we were privileged to actively participate in pharmacist-led clinics for diabetes, HIV, pain management, medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorder, and mental health. Pharmacists conducted their clinics across all complex institutions including: Federal Medical Center (FMC), Low-security, Medium-security, and Camp.



Before starting each clinic, the clinical pharmacist would provide us with the patient's electronic record number to allow us to review recent clinical encounter notes, active medications, labs, documented diagnoses, and current level of care designation. After a brief observation period, we initiated meetings with patients and conducted the chronic care clinics under pharmacist supervision.

During the visit, we were tasked with interviewing patients, providing drug regimen reviews, evaluating therapy adherence, and developing pharmacy care plans. The most memorable moments during clinic involved the patient education interactions. Helping each patient understand his medication(s) and address concerns or barriers to treatment was a rewarding experience.

FMC Butner also provides care for oncology patients by administering chemotherapy on site; therefore, in addition to participating in pharmacist-led clinics, we were fortunate to join the institution oncologist on patient rounds followed by one-on-one discussions of individual patient cases. The oncologist was caring and very generous with his time and knowledge.

Finally, we had the opportunity to participate in multiple COVID-19 vaccination clinics by preparing syringe doses and vaccinating patients and staff. We learned about the COVID-19 vaccination process and the specific conditions in which doses may be prepared and stored prior to administration.

Overall, it was a remarkable experience, especially since both of us were part of the SRCOSTEP program in 2021 and would begin our professional careers with USPHS in the Bureau of Prisons upon graduation. This opportunity helped us further develop our clinical skills working with patients with various chronic diseases, so that one day we can conduct our own pharmacy-led clinics. We also developed a real perspective of working in a correctional setting. We highly encourage students to take this APPE rotation if interested in pursuing a career within the BOP or with USPHS.

Opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Federal Bureau of Prisons or the Department of Justice.

Pharmacy Diversity & Experiences

*Submitted by Ms. Acacia Akiona, 2022 PharmD Candidate; Midwestern University-Glendale
Preceptors: CDR Robert Boyle, PharmD, CDR Jing Li, PharmD*

My passion in pharmacy is to work in a community that serves a unique patient population. I am a Pacific Islander, and having many family members and friends who are Native American, the Native Community is near and dear to my heart. As my didactic courses were coming to an end, it was time to select locations of interest for Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPEs). I selected Phoenix Indian Medical Center (PIMC) and River People Health Center (RPHC) as my Indian Health Service (IHS) preference rotations. When APPE schedules came out about a month later, I was pleased to find out I was approved for not just one, but both locations!

A rotation with IHS is competitive and highly sought after by APPE students. Unlike other rotations, there were more extensive steps and paperwork that needed to be submitted before the rotation at PIMC. One of the requirements was to upload a letter of intent. At first, I was nervous and felt overwhelmed. Later, I realized that past students have not always had a great interest in working for IHS and having students upload a letter of intent allows the site to provide the opportunity to students who are truly interested in serving the Native Communities. My experience at PIMC was more diverse compared to all my previous rotations thus far. I had the opportunity to work in the Specialty Clinic, Pediatric Clinic, Primary Care Clinic, Oncology service for a day, Intensive Care Unit for a day, Latent Tuberculosis Clinic for a day, shadowed the Rheumatology Pharmacist for an afternoon, and counseled patients on various biologic new medications. I enjoyed my experience at PIMC, and it was one of my favorite APPE rotations because I had the opportunity to enjoy a wide diversity of experiences that IHS pharmacy offers.

As my rotation at PIMC came to an end, my next and last APPE rotation was at RPHC, which is a tribally-run service unit. RPHC was also a great experience. I had the opportunity to be involved in pharmacist run clinics that provide medication therapy management to patients by working collaboratively alongside with physicians. The staff at RPHC made me feel like I was part of the team and not just a student. The patients I saw during my rotation inspired me to become the best clinical pharmacist I can be. After graduation, I plan on taking my board exam and applying to IHS locations so that I can eventually work in the pharmacist run clinics such as those I was exposed to at RPHC.

All the pharmacists at both PIMC and RPHC encouraged and helped me learn the most about how to provide the best clinical care for patients, specifically for Native American communities. I am very thankful to everyone I have met during my student pharmacy career, and I am looking forward to what my future holds.



Acacia Akiona, 2022 PharmD Candidate

A Unique Ambulatory Care Rotation Experience at FCC Victorville

Submitted by Ms. Bijou Kim, Pharm.D. Candidate 2022, Keck Graduate Institute School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Before attending pharmacy school, I was completely unaware of how vast the roles are in the pharmacy profession. I was first aware of the United States Public Health Service (PHS) when I heard that Rear Admiral (ret) Pamela M. Schweitzer, Pharm.D., BCACP would be the keynote speaker at the Keck Graduate Institute School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences' annual White Coat Ceremony. This is when I also learned that she was appointed as the first female Chief Professional Officer of Pharmacy for the PHS and provided leadership and coordination with the Office of the Surgeon General and the Department of Health and Human Services. Though I did not have the opportunity to meet with her directly, I remembered the inspiration I felt from listening to her keynote speech. Since then, I made sure to keep PHS open as a possible career path as a practicing pharmacist.

With this in mind, when the opportunity to choose Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) sites arose, I made sure to select Federal Correctional Complex Victorville to complete my ambulatory care APPE rotation, despite the rising challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic kept in place. The first day I arrived for the rotation, I accompanied LT Ozuruigbo to one of the federal correctional institutions on site and observed how medications were delivered in this particular setting. It was an eye-opening experience and quite different from what I was used to seeing in other healthcare settings. I realized as medications were delivered that it does not matter where a person is located, they are our patients and their care is a priority.

Another aspect of this rotation that I was able to actively take part in was the anticoagulation clinic with Dr. Nguyen. I learned that the patients, with the help of a health professional, are taught to be responsible for taking care of their health. This was an important theme especially within the anticoagulation clinic, because patients have to be aware of what symptoms they may experience and be proactive and share these with a medical professional as needed. We visited each patient one by one, checked their International Normalized Ratios (INRs), asked them questions regarding any symptoms or concerns they had, and then documented each patient's status in the electronic health record. There was one patient in particular who stood out to me because the patient was very worried about his INR. We listened to him, answered his questions and concerns, and developed a plan. At the end of speaking with us, he expressed his relief by thanking us for coming by and that it took the weight off his shoulders. Hearing a patient tell us that, made me realize how important it is to get to know patients and even just listening to what they have to say is an important part of treating a patient. Our treatment approach should not always be about treating the condition or the disease with medications, but about treating the patient as a whole.

With the guidance of LCDR Madrigal, we were given opportunities to monitor patients with diabetes, learn how Medication Event Reporting is completed, read through charts of patients with HIV, amongst many other tasks. Though time in this setting as a pharmacist is not easy to come by, she made sure to provide every opportunity for us to understand the workflow and the inner workings of pharmacist's role.

With LCDR Madrigal, LT Ozuruigbo, and Dr. Nguyen, I received a well-rounded ambulatory care experience, especially in the prison setting. I knew even before starting the rotation that despite the



(Left to Right) Bijou Kim, Pharm.D. Candidate 2022, LT Ozuruigbo, LCDR Madrigal, Dr. Nguyen, and Jammie Luong, Pharm.D. Candidate 2022 gathering together one last time at FCC Victorville on final day of APPE rotations

From The Mountain State to The Last Frontier

Submitted by Allison Morris, Pharm.D. Candidate at West Virginia University
Preceptor: LCDR Michelle Locke, PharmD, BCACP



Hiking in Denali National Park, Alexandra Weaver, Allison Morris, William Gu, Andrea Weaver

As someone who was born and raised in West Virginia, I have grown up with an appreciation for the “small town” feel and close connections with those around me. With the past 2 years of hardship and isolations still lingering, I was eager to find a new sense of normalcy and to regain those connections. I have recently found a love for traveling and exploring new places, and I took the opportunity to take advantage of that by ranking Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) in Anchorage for my APPE rotation. I was able to combine my interests for traveling and pharmacy so that I could have a unique and life-changing experience.

Currently, I work as an intern in the inpatient hospital setting, and while I like that setting, I have found that I enjoy the ambulatory/clinic

setting the most because of the patient interaction. The rotation that I am currently on at ANMC is a Transitions of Care rotation. Counseling patients on their discharge medication is a large portion of what I get to do daily. Counseling has helped me expand my knowledge of medications as well as increase my confidence when interacting with patients. The hospital that I was previously employed at did not provide this service at discharge, so this was an entirely new experience for me. I really enjoyed the opportunity to combine the various aspects of inpatient pharmacy with the patient interaction aspects of ambulatory care.

In addition to the discharge counseling, I also learned how to do medication reconciliation, an important patient safety aspect that is often overlooked. The pharmacists at ANMC are involved in every step of the patient’s stay, including providing counseling and preventing errors. It was eye-opening to see how pharmacists can make such an impact in the outpatient pharmacy setting.

Another area of this experience that is unique to ANMC is the patient population that is served. This health system is unique to Alaska Natives and caters to their diverse cultures. My interactions with these patients through this experience have helped my growth as a professional and an individual.

My rotation was only a portion of the new experiences that I have gained here. I have been able to go somewhere new every weekend and see a fraction of the beauty that this state has to offer. We have eaten at some of the favorite local spots and explored as much of the outdoors as possible, including the hike to Flattop, Denali National Park, and a cruise in Kenai Fjords National Park. My time at ANMC has been invaluable, and I am grateful to have been chosen for this rotation and for the opportunities it has provided me.

Fall/Winter 2022

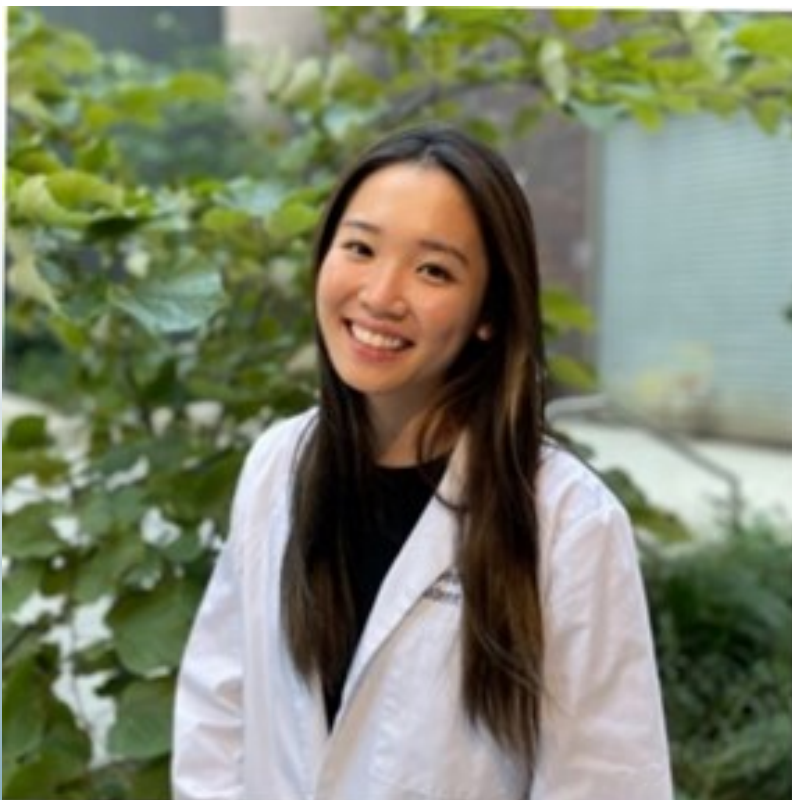
From “The Big Apple” to the “Land of Enchantment”

Submitted by Beatriz Liang, 2024 PharmD. Candidate, Long Island University- The Arnold & Marie Schwartz College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Preceptor: LT Cathy Young, PharmD., BCPS, NCPS

Last summer, I was looking through my emails when I spotted this “government-based internship” that captivated my attention. I am thankful that I applied for this opportunity to work with the USPHS, where I could explore other areas of pharmacy practices. I have met incredible leaders during my internship at the Albuquerque Indian Health Center (AIHC).

The Commissioned Corps officers and the AIHC staff are very welcoming and showed great hospitality during my stay at Albuquerque, New Mexico. I had the opportunity to practice my clinical skills and expand my knowledge of the true meaning of pharmacy. Every day, I was able to learn something new and was able to participate in anticoagulation, diabetes, smoking cessation, and HIV clinics. I spent my time counseling and interviewing patients to assist them with their health plan. In addition, I had the opportunity to participate in the AIHC Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee, where I was able to contribute with my research on drug monograph and drug pricing. By the end of this internship, I had unexpectedly improved my public speaking by a huge margin, which made me feel more confident when talking to my patients. As the days went by in Albuquerque, I was feeling more and more relaxed due to the magnificent working environment. With that, I wished this internship did not have to come to an end so soon.



While the AIHC was an amazing experience, I also had an amazing time exploring Albuquerque. Every morning before reporting to the AIHC, I was able to see the colorful hot air balloons in the blue sky. Not only did the staff and officers show great hospitality and were very welcoming, the people of Albuquerque were welcoming with open arms. I would definitely recommend not only pharmacy students but also other students, wherever they are from, to explore what the USPHS has to offer. I can guarantee you that it will be a lifetime experience you will never forget.

Beatriz Liang, 2024 PharmD. Candidate, Long Island University

It's About the Climb: Experiencing the United States Public Health Service in Alaska

Submitted by Benjamin Stevens, PharmD Candidate 2023, Virginia Commonwealth University
Preceptor: CAPT Anne Marie Bott, PharmD, BCPS, BCOP

"You're going to Alaska?" was the response I got from my friends, family, and previous preceptor when I told them about my highly anticipated oncology/hematology rotation with the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). This was also a thought I had regularly in the months leading up to the rotation. As a Virginia born and raised long time student, I had never been outside of south-eastern United States. When I learned that my pharmacy school offered rotation experiences outside of my home state, I immediately knew I would be taking full advantage of the opportunity to explore some new places. At first, I was overwhelmed with all of the choices. After social distancing my way through the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity to travel could not come fast enough, but was also a bit intimidating. Any sense of fear vanished the second I saw Alaska as one of the possible destinations. I imagined the great state of Alaska to be another world compared to my childhood stomping grounds in Virginia and I was spot on. I was in love with The Last Frontier state from the moment I stepped outside the airport and first saw the snowcapped mountains surrounding Anchorage.

My rotation with Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) was only my second block so needless to say I had a lot to learn. Thankfully, the infusion center proved to be the perfect place for it. I was able to gain valuable experience counseling patients on their home medications' administration and adverse effects. The unique patient population at ANMC provided an opportunity to learn about new culture and allowed me to develop the skills necessary for a pharmacist to provide care congruent with patient's cultural beliefs and practices. Each day I was given the chance to review chemotherapy orders and to see what being an oncology pharmacist entails. While the daunting task of reviewing such complicated orders was overwhelming, I always received support and guidance from all of the amazing pharmacists that I was able to work with. I was also given numerous other opportunities, such as writing an article for the Alaska Pharmacist Association, joining weekly journal clubs with other students from across the nation, and shadowing the compounding process for the chemotherapy agents given in the infusion center. Each of these experiences and the many more that I gained during my time at Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) have made me a better student pharmacist.

My time in Alaska was not entirely academic though. Being here during the summer months of June and July meant there was enough sunlight to truly see the Alaskan outdoors. As an avid hiker most of my free time was spent navigating some of the many hiking trails around Anchorage. I like to think that I am in fairly good shape, but my ego took a substantial hit with the hike to Wolverine Peak. I was eager to challenge myself with a difficult hike that would reward its hikers with an amazing view and Wolverine Peak did not disappoint. I found myself



Benjamin Stevens summiting Wolverine Peak.

Alaska Dreamin'

Submitted by Elizabeth Nash, Pharm.D. Candidate 2022, St. Louis College of Pharmacy

My college is only fifty miles from my childhood home in Missouri, and I have never been outside of my home state for more than a couple of weeks. Needless to say, my 6 week trip to Alaska was going to be unlike anything I had ever experienced before. In mid-March, St. Louis was just starting to thaw into Spring as I boarded my flight to Anchorage. The city was cold, snowy, and covered in ice when my plane touched down. But with a full itinerary, a good coat, and a lot of hope, my trip had begun.

My rotation with the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) was my final Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) before my graduation and one of the best experiences I have had. The team at the infusion pharmacy

made me feel ready to tackle the challenges of managing oncology care from the very beginning. Each day involved reviewing and discussing chemotherapy orders with the pharmacists to find new concepts for me to learn. My favorite part of each day was counseling patients on their home medications; I had a hand in direct patient care and developed a rapport with many patients who will dearly miss. The entire pharmacy team took the time to listen to topic discussions that I had prepared on chemotherapy-induced toxicities, breast cancer, lung cancer, colorectal cancer, and adult acute leukemia. Leading these discussions pushed me to learn more and prepared me for my upcoming residency.

I had the opportunity to see a physician's side of the practice during my rotation at ANMC. I attended tumor board meetings weekly to hear case presentations and discussions on the best plans for each individual patient. I also spent a day shadowing a wonderful oncologist in the oncology clinic, where I learned how to deliver news to patients and solve the puzzle of new oncology referrals. I also improved my writing and publication skills with the chance to write a drug monograph to be presented to the P&T committee and two Alaska Pharmacists Association (AKPhA) newsletter articles for continuing education credit. I learned so much on this rotation about oncology, hematology, the immune system, communication, and the native cultures. I am very fortunate to have completed an APPE with the infusion pharmacy at ANMC.

Not only did I have a fantastic experience at ANMC, but I also made so many memories exploring Alaska! During my first week here my life changed in so many ways. I got engaged on Beluga Point and matched with my favorite residency program. In the evenings and over the weekends I enjoyed the Alaskan wilderness as Spring began. My favorite experience was hiking on Matanuska Glacier. It felt like the quintessential Alaskan excursion, complete with a moose sighting! I also booked some time to ride on a dog sled led by dogs who had run the Iditarod multiple times and had a blast playing with the pups. In between all this, I enjoyed driving the Seward highway and hiking. My favorite trails were to Thunderbird Falls and Flattop Mountain. The mountain views were breathtaking and offered the chance for me to see the Aurora Borealis one cold April night. To top it off, I visited the museums around Anchorage to learn about the history and culture of Alaska; I only fell more enamored with the rugged and gorgeous state.



Elizabeth at Glen Alps Peak, Anchorage, Alaska

A Rotation Above the Rest

Submitted by Ms. Melody Shipman, PharmD candidate 2022

Preceptor: LT D.J. Flynn, PharmD, BCPS

If you are from Springfield, Missouri you have likely driven past the Federal Medical Prison at the corner of Kansas and Sunshine and wondered what lies beyond the guard tower and rows of razor wire. Chances are, you have even heard a rumor or two about famous inmates that have been housed there.

During the month of March, I had the privilege of completing my Health Systems Rotation with LT Flynn at the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners (MCFP) in Springfield. Prior to my rotation I had never stepped foot in a prison and had no idea what to expect. The only ideas I had were based on what I had seen on television or in movies. I read the manual (a few times) before my first day to ensure I was knowledgeable on what not to bring, acceptable attire and appropriate conduct. But as I passed through security and waited for my preceptor behind a few metal gates, I was overwhelmed with curiosity.

The pharmacy within MCFP Springfield offers a unique combination of inpatient, outpatient, and ambulatory pharmacy elements. Throughout my rotation, the learning opportunities exceeded my expectations. I was able to observe or participate in a variety of clinical pharmacy offerings, including individual management of diabetes and coagulation, naloxone risk reduction, medication exit counseling, interdisciplinary meetings, Hepatitis C and HIV medication counseling, pharmacy informatics, and psychology meetings.

I was able to teach two diabetes management classes for the inmate patients and observe several others taught by a pharmacist and a registered dietician. As I prepared my lecture content, I was challenged to incorporate new dietary and regulatory considerations for the inmate patient population. The course was a great success with high participation and engagement.

MCFP Springfield is home to the largest dialysis center within the Bureau of Prisons, with the capability of dialyzing forty-four patients simultaneously. I spent time rounding with the hemodialysis team consisting of a physician, physician's assistant, and a registered dietician. Being able to care for patients undergoing hemodialysis in person was an invaluable experience, which expanded my knowledge of the process as well as specific monitoring and medication management for this population.

Medication rounding with the psychiatrist included abbreviated individual visits to assess medication compliance, safety, and efficacy. I was able to see numerous psychiatric conditions at all functional levels.

The psychiatrist described the treatment algorithm for antipsychotic medications, which helped me gain a better insight as to why certain agents/dosing/frequencies might be selected for specific individuals.

The experience provided me with a better understanding of medication management for psychiatric patients as well as side effect profiles that will be applicable to my future practice.

Throughout the rotation LT Flynn provided projects that aligned with my personal interests. This included drug information questions, chronic disease state management SOAP notes, and a treatment guideline comparison of current ADA/AHA guidelines with Bureau of Prison recommendations. I also gave presentations on antidiabetic



Melody Shipman, PharmD Candidate, UMKC Class of 2022

Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin' in Oklahoma

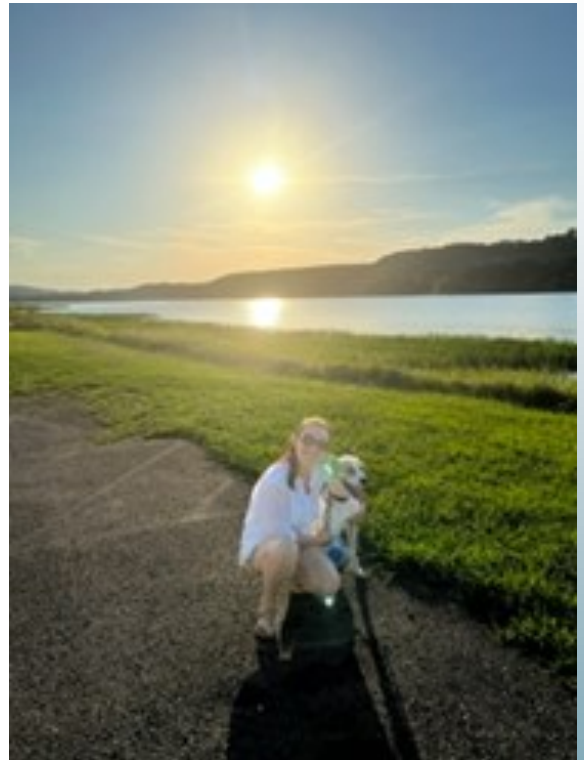
Submitted by Sera Lee, PharmD Candidate 2024, Virginia Commonwealth University

Well that cowboy Curly McLain from the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Oklahoma!* sure didn't lie about the "beautiful mornins" in Oklahoma as he goes off to see his farm girl Laurey Williams. While I didn't get asked to the box social dance by a cowboy during my JRCOSTEP in OK, I did get to work at El Reno Indian Health Clinic, located 30 miles outside of Oklahoma City, OK. When I applied for the JRCOSTEP at the end of my first year of pharmacy school, I knew that I had control over the location of the externship, however, I was simply excited by the prospect of being able to immerse myself in a new culture and to work with an underserved population in my capacity as a pharmacy student.

Prior to starting pharmacy school in 2020, I was an elementary teacher for 12 years. During my teaching career, I've always wanted to teach on an American Indian Reservation, but never got an opportunity, so imagine my delight at finding out that I would be working at El Reno Indian Health Clinic in OK! After I finished calling/texting/emailing everyone that I've known since first grade about my JRCOSTEP acceptance, I planned how I would get to OK from VA. I have a very needy 55 lb fur baby, so I didn't want to travel by air. I recruited two separate road trip buddies/free drivers to help me make the ~1,300 mile trip one-way from VA to IA and also IA to OK.

On my first day at El Reno clinic, I met CDR Narcisso Soliz PharmD, MHA, BCPS and Molly Steen PharmD, BCACP. They were very warm and made me feel very welcome at the El Reno Clinic. The following week, Molly left to another job location due to a promotion and for the rest of my externship, I worked with Sara Carter PharmD, BCACP. Sara was very organized and gave me a calendar of learning opportunities that I would have during my month-long rotation. While working at the El Reno Clinic, I was able to assist in their tobacco cessation and anticoagulation programs. On my first day, I was able to meet Abby, another seasoned JRCOSTEP, who was stationed at a different nearby clinic. She helped me acclimate to JRCOSTEP roles and responsibilities. Later, Abby and I were able to collaborate on a Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) presentation on Indian Health Clinic formulary vitamin D products. While we were unable to formally present at the P&T meeting, I enjoyed the collaborative process and being able to contribute to a relevant issue.

While listening in on the P&T committee meeting, one of the physicians brought up the topic of diabetes and the recent American Diabetes Association (ADA) update on using Sodium Glucose Transport Proteins Inhibitors (SGLT2) and Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 Agonist (GLP1) as first line rather than metformin for patients who are at high risk for atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, heart failure, and chronic kidney disease (CKD). The physician forwarded the link for the article, which was on the cover of the July 2022 *Pharmacy Today* for everyone to read. Imagine my delight when I saw Dr. Evan Sisson's name all over the article! I shouted "That's my professor! He wrote



Sera Lee, Somewhere along OK and AR border

Venturing Past my Comfort Zone as a JRCOSTEP in South Dakota

Submitted by Gabriela Marrero PharmD Candidate 2024, Nova Southeastern University College of Pharmacy
Preceptor CDR Lori Braaten PharmD, BCPS, BCACP

Growing up in Cuba, I witnessed firsthand the needs for adequate health care. After moving to the United States, my vision and passion has been to promote accessible and sustainable public health in underserved communities facing social and economic barriers. I first learned about USPHS through USPHS Career Day at my school, and I was immediately drawn to the idea of getting involved in public health to help minority communities, which led me to apply for a JRCOSTEP. I was ecstatic after receiving the email saying I was going to Sisseton, South Dakota, but also scared since I have never been away from my family. Despite this fear, and with encouragement from my family, I drove across the country with eager anticipation for what was to come.

Some of the projects I completed at the Woodrow Wilson Keeble Memorial Health Care Center (WWKMHCC) included updating their annual non-formulary spreadsheet, reviewing their formulary list for recent additions, creating a blood pressure check competency form for pharmacy staff, and revising their antibiotic pediatric weight-based dose chart. Additionally, I created a tobacco cessation referral tracking tool so the pharmacy-managed tobacco cessation clinic can accurately track patient statuses and which patients are due for follow-up. I was fortunate to be a part of many clinical interactions between pharmacists and patients. I participated in a patient visit with the pharmacy-managed anticoagulation clinic, and was able to see how pharmacists perform Point-Of-Care INR testing and counsel patients on anticoagulation management. I also joined in a pharmacist visit for a hepatitis C initial consultation with a patient regarding genotype labs to choose the best treatment for the patient. I shadowed pharmacy staff preparing daptomycin for infusion for the first time and I learned all the measures taken in sterile compounding. I attended a Pharmacy & Therapeutics meeting, a Medical Staff meeting, and a Diabetes Class. The Diabetes Class broadened my knowledge on how

to explain diabetes to patients utilizing patient-friendly language, how to help them identify foods that are more suitable for patients living with diabetes, and examples of physical activity that they can incorporate into their lifestyle. In between projects and shadowing, I helped in the pharmacy by processing prescription refills, filling medication, and dispensing medications to patients.

My time at the WWKMHCC has been the ultimate experience for pursuing a career in ambulatory care and for understanding what it takes to provide patients with the best healthcare possible. I am thankful for this experience and my preceptor,



Gabriela Marrero (PharmD Candidate 2024), CDR Lori Braaten

My Path to the Food and Drug Administration: FDA Pharmacy Student Experiential Program

Submitted by: Justin Rayyan, Pharm.D. Candidate 2023

Preceptors: LCDR Tramara Dam, Pharm.D., BCSCP, BS, GWCPM and Tri Le, Pharm.D.

When starting my pharmacy school career, I knew I had aspirations for a larger impact on patient care. I previously interned at a pharmaceutical company, but I wasn't satisfied with my time there. I shifted my focus to researching public health opportunities, such as the U.S. Public Health Service JRCOSTEP. I applied and was accepted to the Fort Yuma Indian Health Services. Unfortunately, they had to rescind my offer due to my summer rotation schedule. I did not let this setback stop me from pursuing a role in a public health agency. When it came time to choose my advanced pharmacy practice experience rotations, I took the risk and applied for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Pharmacy Student Experiential Program (PSEP). My school informed me that if I apply, there is no guarantee that I will be accepted. And

if declined, I would have to choose from the leftover rotations and could not be considered for other rotations at public health agencies. There I was, sitting in class, when I received the email from my preceptors, LCDR Tramara Dam and Dr. Tri Le, stating that I was accepted to the FDA PSEP for my first rotation. I was overcome with excitement and nerves as my first rotation was going to be at the FDA.

Those nerves quickly went away as my preceptors were welcoming and determined to make the most out of my 6 weeks here. I utilized training resources to understand the inner workings of the FDA and was able to get hands-on experience with projects immediately. Since I had two preceptors, I was exposed to two different offices within CDER, the Office of Manufacturing Quality and the Office of Management. I learned the process behind regulatory decision-making around manufacturing, Current Good Manufacturing Practices, warning letters, drug shortages, and more. I also learned about the OTC Drug Monograph User Fee Program and the critical role of user fees. Since this is a newer program, I was able to assist with standardizing responses to external stakeholder inquiries and helped create training resources for new hires. For my final presentation, my preceptors allowed me to pick a topic of my choice. I created a presentation on Real-World Evidence and its regulatory implications. This is an area I am eager to pursue in my post-graduate career, so having the opportunity to understand how the FDA views Real-World Evidence was an incredible opportunity.

I quickly added all the pharmacy student lectures to my calendar because they all sparked my interest. These lectures provided students with an opportunity to learn about topics they would never be exposed to in a traditional pharmacy setting. The opportunity to see pharmacists working in such diverse roles really showed the versatility of a Pharm.D. degree. I also had the privilege



Justin Rayyan, Pharm.D. Candidate, Class of 2023

Fall/Winter 2022

LCDR Jessica Snukis Lectures to South College School of Pharmacy Students in Public Health Course

Submitted by: Dr. Lauren Ladd and LCDR Jessica Snukis



Photo of then ENS Jessica Snukis (now LCDR) during her JRCOSTEP in 2010, serving with RDF-1 conducting training with the Tennessee Department of Health on planning and preparing for a mass disruption in community medical services and subsequent stand up of an FMS.

LCDR Snukis has served as a volunteer guest lecturer in our Public Health course (PPR 6250) in our first-year pharmacy school curriculum at South College School of Pharmacy during the 2022 summer quarter. During this time, she lectured for 1.5 total lecture hours to 50 students. LCDR Snukis serves as our local lead University Point of Contact for the United States Public Health Service (USPHS), and volunteered to serve as a guest lecturer in our Public Health course to further educate our students.

During LCDR Snukis' presentation, she provided an introduction to the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, where she shared USPHS history, mission, and values. LCDR Snukis shared how USPHS Officers serve on the front lines of health emergencies, deploying to natural disasters,

disease outbreaks, global public health emergencies, and humanitarian assistance missions. LCDR Snukis shared her firsthand experience at Federal Correctional Institution Danbury, Connecticut, where she discussed improving drug therapy for the underserved and vulnerable populations. LCDR Snukis also shared her current role, which is beyond traditional pharmaceutical care, working in the Unaccompanied Children's Program at the Administration for Children and Families. As a prior Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training and Extern Program participant, LCDR Snukis discussed opportunities for pharmacy students to get involved now with the USPHS while gaining valuable professional experience.

LCDR Snukis left a positive impact on many students, as demonstrated by survey feedback submitted by students, where LCDR Snukis received feedback as serving as the most impactful speaker. A direct quote from one of my students was, "The guest speaker that impacted me the most was Dr. Snukis. She impacted me because I was not aware of this position available to pharmacists, and I also think what she does is very important when there is a public health emergency such as natural disasters and disease outbreaks." LCDR Snukis' service has been voluntary in nature and no monetary compensation has been awarded. We are very grateful for her willingness to share with our students and the invaluable impact she has on our students.



Oncology in Alaska

Submitted by Raul (JR) Carpentero, PharmD Candidate 2023, Idaho State University
Preceptor: CAPT Anne Marie Bott, PharmD, BCPS, BCOP



My life in Alaska started in 2002, when my mother and I moved from the Philippines to join my father in Dutch Harbor/Unalaska, who had lived there since the early 1990s. It was a total culture shock for me to move from a highly populated city in Manila to a rural island on the Aleutian chain, with a population of approximately 4000 at the time. I remember having to learn English as quickly as possible while at the same time having to adjust to a climate on the opposite end of the spectrum from my previous home. Fortunately, I was able to make friends and take full advantage of what Unalaska had to offer in terms of scenery, outdoor activities, and the opportunity for immersion into a wide array of cultures. While my transition to life in Alaska took a considerable amount of time and effort, I reminisce and think about how grateful I am to have grown up in such a

wonderful, safe, and welcoming community. I graduated from Unalaska City High School in 2015, attended the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) for my undergraduate career, and enrolled in the pharmacy program conjoined with Idaho State University (ISU) in 2019. Fast forwarding to the present, I'm well into my P4 year and preparing to become a pharmacist.

My rotation here at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) provided me with an opportunity to delve deeper into the world of oncology, a field that many pharmacy students, including myself, would consider to be one of the most difficult to learn. However, I was welcomed to the challenge by an amazing group of pharmacists and was able to learn effectively throughout my six weeks at ANMC. My daily routine consisted of verifying chemotherapy regimens for several oncology patients, while also educating them on a variety of medications used to either treat the cancer or mitigate side effects of chemotherapy. I was very appreciative of all my opportunities to talk to patients, as I believe that patient interaction is one of the most integral aspects of being a pharmacist. Aside from day-to-day activities, I was also able to immerse myself in other educational experiences such as presenting journal clubs, attending tumor board meetings, participating in cancer topic discussions, and writing continuing education articles on pharmacy burnout as well as new cancer therapies such as Lutetium Lu 177 Vipivotide Tetraxetan for the Alaska Pharmacists Association Newsletter.

Overall, my experience in this ANMC oncology rotation was spectacular. Due to my mother's passing from cancer in 2017, I had many doubts about my mental capabilities to participate and learn in such an environment. However, I owe it to my preceptor, CAPT Anne Marie Bott, as well as all the other pharmacists I had the pleasure of working with, for being so considerate and for providing me with an unforgettable learning experience .



Raul (JR) Carpentero on the Crow Pass Trail in Chugach National Forest

Realizing the Versatility of a Pharmacist within the FDA

Submitted by: Reema Shah, Pharm.D. Candidate 2023

Preceptors: LCDR Tramara Dam, Pharm.D., BCSCP, BS, GWCPM and Tri Le, Pharm.D.

For many students, having a rotation at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is a privilege. As pharmacy students, we learn about the importance and responsibility of providing the utmost care to patients, to improve patient outcomes and the quality of their lives through life-changing therapies. This aligns with the FDA's mission to protect and promote the public health by ensuring the safety and efficacy of products for patient use. While a five-week advanced pharmacy practice experience rotation at the FDA was short, it was eye-opening.

Prior to my FDA rotation, I had a few internship opportunities at pharmaceutical companies in various functional areas, where I was exposed to several of the roles that a person with a pharmacy background can hold. An agency like the FDA focuses on regulatory processes, an area that I was not too knowledgeable of, but had a desire to learn. From day one of my rotation, I was given a student guide which listed professionals in various areas within the FDA whom I can network with along with a summary of student lectures. I recall on the first day of my rotation, LCDR Dam and Dr. Le asked me what my goals of the rotation were. One of my goals for this rotation was to network with many professionals to gain a better understanding of FDA's role and the opportunities pharmacists have, so I can help patients in my community further regardless of the path I take post-graduation. The combination of networking and attending the student lectures provided the perfect balance of receiving a flavor of some of the many roles of pharmacists at the FDA. From Office of Surveillance and Epidemiology Regulatory Science, where pharmacists utilize FDA Adverse Event Reporting System to identify safety signals to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, where pharmacists work as part of an interdisciplinary team with other healthcare professionals within a correctional facility to manage a variety of disease states, medications, and preventive health services. Recent pharmacy graduates can also apply to ORISE fellowships to receive an opportunity to "test drive" career interests while working alongside professionals who can provide mentoring, engage in several projects, and further their professional goals. Regardless of their background, pharmacists' roles at the FDA are so versatile since they have the expertise in drugs and desire to help patients.

Overall, a rotation at the FDA can play a pivotal role in students' professional development as it provides a different perspective into the United States healthcare organizations. It is paramount to take advantage of many of the resources offered during the rotation and to network with as many professionals as possible while having meaningful conversations. Pharmacy is a small world, and this rotation can open doors to future career opportunities. I was able to learn a lot about the Office of Compliance through various projects, including about nonconformity trends in manufacturing quality during firm investigations. These investigations are designed to increase compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices, which improves consumer safety. I also followed issues related to the FDA's recommendations for exercising regulatory flexibility in the case of an adulterated or misbranded drug that is in short supply. I would highly recommend this rotation to any pharmacy student.



Reema Shah, Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate, Class of 2023, Rutgers University, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy

Howard University Apothecary Brunch

Submitted by CDR Yvon Yeo, PharmD, MPH, CPH, CCHP



CDR Yvon Yeo, PharmD, MPH, CPH, CCHP and Brian Hurdle

On April 16, 2022, LCDR Emeka Egwim and I were invited to attend the Howard University College of Pharmacy Student Council (CPSC) Apothecary Brunch. It was the first time Howard University held the Apothecary Brunch, an awards ceremony, since the COVID-19 pandemic. Excitement filled the air as faculty, students and well-wishers gathered to celebrate.

We were at the Apothecary Brunch to present the USPHS Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award to a deserving student, Brian Hurdle. For LCDR Egwim, he felt nostalgic, as it was his alma mater. For me, I was excited too. There are less than five pharmacy schools in the National Capital Region. Getting the opportunity to present the USPHS Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Awards was a privilege.

The event began with opening remarks from the CPSC and CVS (CVS was the sponsor of the brunch). Later, brunch was served buffet-style, while the Dean delivered the welcome speech. Next, the awards ceremony began. Many deserving pharmacy students, faculty members, college administrative staff, service organizations, and student council members were recognized.

When it came time to present the USPHS Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award, LCDR Egwim and I headed to the podium and gave our speeches, using the template provided by the USPHS PharmPAC Student Awards Team. Brian Hurdle, the USPHS awardee, was recognized for his efforts in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 through the coordination of mass-vaccination events for DC residents, management of a COVID-19 testing site for Howard University students, and delivering prescriptions and providing medication counseling to DC residents when the city went into lockdown during the early stages of the pandemic.

After the awards ceremony, LCDR Egwim and I stayed behind to talk with the students about the many career opportunities, including traditional and non-traditional career paths, for pharmacists in the USPHS.



Fall/Winter 2022

JRCOSTEP's Experience in IHS

Submitted by ENS Jacqueline Eissa, PharmD Candidate 2023



Jacqueline Eissa, PharmD Candidate 2023

As a first-year pharmacy student, I was unsure of what career path I wanted to pursue. At the school's career fair, I was drawn to the military uniforms at the FDA booth and was interested in knowing what role a pharmacist plays in the FDA. Then, I met CAPT Liatte Closs and CDR James Mason, who represented the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS). Through our conversation, I learned about the different career opportunities available to PHS officers. I was interested and provided them with my contact information. A year later, I reached out to ask for an internship opportunity with the FDA. Instead, CAPT Liatte Closs informed me of an internship opportunity with USPHS Commissioned Corps. I applied and was accepted to the JRCOSTEP (Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training Extern Program) position. I believed the JRCOSTEP opportunity would provide me with the first step to a career in the USPHS.

I was thrilled when I was assigned to the Indian Health Services (IHS), which is an underserved population that I had never served before. I was selected to report from New Jersey to the Phoenix Indian Medical Center (PIMC) in Phoenix, AZ. When I arrived at PIMC, I was greeted by my preceptor CAPT Jing Li. She gave me a tour of the hospital and introduced me to the pharmacy team. I was assigned to work in the inpatient department with CAPT Kelly Owens, where I reviewed patients' profiles. For the inpatients, I checked for proper medication dosing based on the labs and counseled patients on their medications upon discharge. I was also able to rotate through the main pharmacy, pediatric pharmacy, specialty pharmacy, tobacco cessation clinic, HIV and hepatitis clinics, and cardiovascular disease clinic. I completed a few projects, one of which was an educational presentation for nurses regarding Infliximab's biosimilar. Another was on how to pre-medicate and treat patients with infusion reactions. I also gave a presentation on how to apply for the REMS training program for SUBLOCADE. I presented a patient case on Kaposi Sarcoma and HIV. My major project was data analysis regarding the hospital's use of non-formulary medications and their cost-effectiveness. That involved me looking at the medications that were not on the formulary but were used at the site, then comparing their cost and effectiveness. As a result, some medications were added to the formulary. At the end of my experience, I spent time with CAPT Catherine Witte, who serves as a Pharmacist and Chaplain at PIMC. She taught me about Native American culture and traditions and how to talk to patients and their families regarding their end-stage diseases and possibly death.

I had a great experience working at PIMC. The pharmacy team helped and supported me during my training. While I was away from my hometown, I learned and developed leadership and clinical skills. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to serve and provide care to underserved patients. This experience with the Commissioned Corps mission has given me a great sense of fulfillment. I look forward to using the skills I have acquired to help develop the career path that I know is the right choice for me.



The Experience of a Lifetime in the Land of Enchantment

Submitted by Jamie Harpel, PharmD Candidate 2023

Throughout my life, I have always had an interest in learning about the history, culture, and geography of our world. Unsurprisingly, travel has become a passion of mine. When I found out about the opportunity to do one of my pharmacy rotations at the Northern Navajo Medical Center in Shiprock, New Mexico, I knew that it was an opportunity of a lifetime. Fortunately, this opportunity became a reality for me. Although I had some initial concerns about logistics, they were greatly relieved when I found out my good friend and roommate from Wilkes University was also chosen for the same rotation as I was.

My rotation at the Northern Navajo Medical Center provided an unbelievable educational, cultural, and hands-on learning experience. As part of the Indian Health Service (IHS), this federal health program provides an extensive scope of both inpatient and outpatient care services. My preceptor, Dr. Abisola Tairu, always sought to provide me with opportunities to meet my individual pharmacy goals and to gain experience in my areas of interest. I had the oppor-

tunity to rotate through various clinics such as the Coumadin, asthma, and epilepsy clinics. I observed the pharmacists practicing at the top of their clinical profession by performing physical assessments, diagnosing conditions, and prescribing medications. I was able to collaborate with many healthcare professionals and directly interact with patients by providing outpatient counseling on medications. My documentation skills improved greatly as I gained experience writing SOAP (subjective, objective, assessment, and plan) notes in patient charts. I also had the opportunity to conduct a journal club, topic discussions, and a patient case presentation on DRESS (drug reaction with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms) Syndrome.

In addition to an excellent pharmacy experience, I also had many opportunities to explore the great southwest with my friend during our free time: we hiked to the Ice Lake Basin at over 12,000 feet elevation outside Silverton, Colorado; attended the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in New Mexico; hiked the geological formations of Arches National Park, Utah; and walked through the narrow canyon walls of Antelope Canyon, Arizona. Unforgettable works of nature were found at every place I visited.

I am so grateful for the people I met and the experiences I encountered through my rotation at the Northern Navajo Medical Center. I had the opportunity to learn about the Navajo Indian culture, utilize my clinical knowledge, interact with patients and professionals, challenge myself, and grow stronger as an individual and future pharmacist. The rotation was definitely an opportunity of a lifetime and I encourage future students to step out of their comfort zone and experience a rotation in IHS as well.



Jamie Harpel at the Northern Navajo Medical Center



Jamie Harpel hiking the Ice Lake Basin Trail

Fall/Winter 2022

USPHS recruitment at 2022 LECOM Virtual Career Day

Submitted by LCDR Gladys Asabre Williams, PharmD, CDCES, and CDR Yvon Yeo, PharmD, MPH, CPH, CCHP

On July 6, 2022, CDR Tamy Leung, LCDR Gladys Williams, and CDR Yvon Yeo had the opportunity (yet again) to participate in a virtual career day hosted by the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) School of Pharmacy. The career day was for final year pharmacy students in the three-year accelerated pathway pharmacy program in the Erie, Pennsylvania, campus. We were grateful for this annual opportunity to meet with pharmacy students and introduce them to the Commissioned Corps, since only a few of them had heard about the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS). There were several breakout rooms for recruiters from different sectors, ranging from retail to hospital and the uniformed services. The USPHS breakout room was visited by 20 students this year.

We utilized the following recruitment resources during the career day:

1. USAJobs.gov to search for pharmacist vacancies in various federal agencies in different geographical locations.
2. ihs.gov for information on the Indian Health Service (IHS) Loan Repayment Program, how to apply for IHS jobs, and job vacancies.
3. PHS-RX-STUDENTS@LIST.NIH.GOV listserv to receive information related to job opportunities in federal agencies.
4. ICE Health Service Corps Max.gov page for job opportunities in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Health Service Corps.
5. Pharmacist Professional Advisory Committee pharmacy recruitment presentation.
6. Officer Secure Area Communication Tools and Resources page:
 - **Elevator speech** to provide a quick synopsis on USPHS – our history, who we are, what we do to advance and promote the health and safety of our nation, and some of the benefits to joining the service.
 - **8 steps to become a U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Public Health Service Officer** infographic to inform students on the USPHS application process.
 - USPHS virtual backdrop for Zoom.

Since the USPHS officers came from diverse federal agencies, CDR Leung gave an overview of her position at Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and briefly touched on her previous work experience at Indian Health Service (IHS). CDR Yeo discussed

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main window displays a presentation slide titled "Category Board" with the following content:

Category Board
The Call to Active Duty team will schedule a professional appointment board interview with senior ranking Public Health Service officers. After you have successfully cleared the professional board, your name will be submitted for a nomination.

7 Seek Employment Opportunities with Federal Agencies
You may begin to seek employment opportunities with Federal agencies if you have not already secured such employment or have not already started to search. You can visit usajobs.gov or contact the Chief Professional Officer within the specific category to obtain a list of vacancies or employment opportunities.

8 Call to Active Duty
If you are offered a position, your hiring agency will communicate an intent to commission you into the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Final requirements are then verified and an offer of commissioning is extended to you by the USPHS Commissioned Corps. Once you accept the offer, official orders are issued to call you to active duty.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact the Call Center at 1-888-225-3302 or direct your questions to cchelpdesk@ihs.gov. For specific questions related to an Inter-Service Transfer (IST), please email phlist-assist@ihs.gov.
For more information or to start your application visit usphs.gov.

On the right side of the Zoom window, there is a list of participants:

- U.S. Public Health Ser...
- U.S. Public Health Ser...
- Public Health Service Y...
- Derek Chernuta
- Jennifer Kline
- Natasha Pletcher
- Yong Peng
- Monica Rusa

At the bottom of the Zoom window, there is a caption:

From top to bottom: USPHS officers: CDR Tamy Leung, LCDR Gladys Williams, and CDR Yvon Yeo with LECOM pharmacy students: Derek Chernuta, Jennifer Kline, Natasha Pletcher, Yong Peng, and Monica Rusa.

Guaranteed to Grow: My Experience at the U.S. FDA

Submitted by: Sara Gyulakian, Pharm.D. Candidate 2023, Massachusetts

Preceptors: Dr. Tri Le, Pharm.D. and LCDR Tramara Dam, Pharm.D., BCSCP, BS, GWCPM



Sara Gyulakian, Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate 2023, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, bicentennial class

To work for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is an honor. This honor and privilege to protect the nation's health is not to be taken lightly or for granted; with great power comes great responsibility. For many pharmacy students, the idea of completing a rotation within the FDA is a dream. Being able to leverage and bring our expertise as student pharmacists to the agency that protects public health is meaningful and fulfilling. I am blessed to say that my dream became a reality when I was accepted into the agency's pharmacy student experiential program to complete a 6-week rotation within the Office of Manufacturing Quality (OMQ) and Office of Management (OM). These last 6 weeks have been nothing short of amazing and some of the most rewarding and transformational weeks of my life. As my time as a pharmacy student extern within OMQ comes to an end, I am grateful to have the chance to reflect on my experience.

It was an honor and privilege to work within the agency and be a part of supporting something larger than myself – public health and safety. Within OM, I had the privilege of learning about and supporting its' mission of providing exceptional customer service, guidance, and education on resource and administrative management activities to protect human and animal health. Additionally, I had the opportunity to expand the boundaries of my knowledge regarding regulatory actions as they pertain to public health within OMQ jurisdiction. This includes Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMPs), other drug and product adulterations, and regulatory actions related to manufacturing quality violations (e.g., warning letters to and regulatory meetings with drug and/or product manufacturing firms). I also had the opportunity to work on real-world projects alongside my fellow pharmacy student extern(s) and team. These projects gave me exposure to employee level responsibilities and duties, ultimately contributing to my professional growth and development. Expanding my knowledge and understanding of the agency's role in quality compliance gave me a deep appreciation for the work that pharmacists and other employees do at the FDA. Although my rotation was completed remotely, I still had many opportunities to network and build meaningful relationships with individuals from various teams who work for the FDA. By leveraging the online remote platform, I was able to connect with so many incredibly kind, passionate and dedicated individuals within the FDA. The fact that many of them were pharmacists was such a sweet and remarkable feeling, and a testament to the immense value of pharmacists and the pharmacy profession.

Having dedicated, passionate and sincere mentors and teachers is a crucial component of growth and development for students. I was very lucky to have dedicated and passionate preceptors, Dr. Tri Le and Dr. Tramara Dam. The guidance and support that I received was unmatched. Dr. Le's dedication to encouraging self-reflection and development is rare, as is Dr. Dam's dedication to serving the community, as well as the FDA. I cannot thank them and everyone who helped me along the way during my time at the

Fall/Winter 2022

Commissioned Officers Active in Developing the Next Generation of Health Professionals

Submitted by LCDR Shaunte' Tucker, PharmD, MS, CCHP

LCDR Tucker, a lead University Point of Contact (UPOC) for Midwestern University, has had the honor of serving as a judge, mentor, point of contact, and recruiter since 2019 with Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). HOSA is a national organization with a mission to empower future health professionals to become leaders in the global health community through education, collaboration, and experience.



With over 200,000 members and 4,500 chapters, the purpose of the HOSA organization is to develop leadership and technical skill competencies through a program of motivation, awareness, and recognition. HOSA chapters are student-led organizations that provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills, career qualifications, and networking opportunities with peers and professionals.

Participating with the HOSA organization is a great opportunity for Public Health Service (PHS) Officers to be visible leaders in health care, while promoting the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) to middle school, secondary, post-secondary, and collegiate students that are eager to gain knowledge on different healthcare career paths as they embark on a journey to become future health professionals.

During the 2022 Arizona HOSA 17th annual State Leadership Conference held in Tucson, AZ, LCDR Tucker judged the public health topic: “Good Oral Health = Good Overall Health.” Highly impressed by a group of 4 student competitors and their presentation on oral health, she decided to pull them aside to commend the group on their exceptional delivery of a topic that falls under, “Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General.” She informed the students that during her Officer Basic Training course (OBC), she was placed in a group that was assigned the public health topic of oral health. LCDR Tucker added that her group ended up winning the top award in their OBC class, receiving a certificate for their presentation.

LCDR Tucker has participated as a judge for a plethora of HOSA competitive events over the years including: public health, pharmacology, pharmacy science, prepared speaking, cultural diversities and disparities, public service announcement, medical reserve corps initiatives, biomedical debates, HOSA bowls, creative problem solving, and researched persuasive writing and speaking. LCDR Tucker states, “I find it rewarding to continuously volunteer for HOSA events. I am always in awe at the level of clinical skills, professionalism, and knowledge these students have. I find myself learning from and being motivated by these future health professionals. These students are intelligent, innovative, inquisitive, and they reassure me that the future of healthcare is in good hands.”



Caption: (Left to Right) Brooklyn Williams, Taylee Crockett, LCDR Shaunte' Tucker, Skylah Selness-Levario, and Timothy Kaczor pictured after the group of HOSA students presented the Public Health Topic “Good Oral Health = Good Overall Health”

Pharm.D. Careers at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Submitted by: Joyce Chen, Pharm.D., Candidate 2023

Preceptors: Tri Le, Pharm.D. and LCDR Tramara Dam, Pharm.D., BCSCP, BS, GWCPM

During my externship at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), I spoke with numerous Pharm.D. professionals to learn about opportunities to work at the FDA with a Pharm.D. background, whether as an experienced pharmacist or an aspiring pharmacy student. Pharm.D. professionals may work in all kinds of offices and positions at the FDA. I found that the FDA pharmacists I spoke with often worked in one of the following positions, but are not limited to:

1. Fellowships, including the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) Fellowship and Regulatory Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship,
2. Regulatory Project Manager (RPM),
3. Clinical Pharmacology Reviewer, or
4. Health Scientist.

FDA Fellowships are an excellent entry path for pharmacy students to start a career in the FDA immediately after graduating, without the requirement of years of experience. Two types of FDA fellowships are the ORISE Fellowship and the Regulatory Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship. Firstly, the ORISE fellowship provides college students, recent graduates, and university faculty with opportunities to work on unique projects and research at the FDA. The ORISE fellowship is research-focused and the responsibilities vary per position. Meanwhile, the Regulatory Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship offers opportunities across three diverse settings in government, academia, and the pharmaceutical industry. The types of Regulatory Pharmaceutical Industry fellowship positions offered include Drug Information, Medication Safety, Regulatory Advertising and Promotion, or Regulatory Affairs and Policy.

The **Regulatory Project Manager (RPM)** position may be the most popular role for pharmacists at the FDA. However, a year of post-graduate work experience may be required to apply for the RPM position. The RPM may work in a variety of FDA offices, including the Office of New Drugs (OND). A Regulatory Project Manager in the OND is assigned a drug product and is responsible for managing the product in the investigational stage, through the application cycle, to approval according to the Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA) Guidelines. The RPM schedules and conducts all of the meetings for different stakeholders, including FDA offices and firms.

The **Clinical Pharmacology Reviewer** closely reviews Investigational New Drugs (INDs), New Drug Applications (NDAs), and Biologic Licensing Applications (BLAs). Clinical pharmacology is involved in multiple stages of the drug development process, from



Joyce Chen, Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate, Class of 2023
Rutgers University, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy

Seize the Opportunity: Rotation in FDA Office of Manufacturing Quality

Submitted by: Razina Pathan, Pharm.D. Candidate 2023

Preceptors: LCDR Tramara Dam, Pharm.D., BCSCP, BS, GWCPM and Tri Le, Pharm.D.

When embarking on the adventure known as the fourth year of pharmacy school, there was one rotation I anticipated with great excitement and that is the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rotation. When my school started preparing us for the selection of our rotations, my ambition to pursue an FDA rotation was at an all-time high. Throughout my pharmacy school career, I have been fortunate to be involved in multiple pharmaceutical industry internships and experiences ranging from pharmacovigilance to medical and scientific communications to clinical development. All of these experiences continued to deepen my interest in exploring the FDA and gaining a strong foundation for how the FDA enforces regulations that allow for safety and efficacy of marketed medications. When I received notification that I had been selected for an FDA rotation in the Office of Compliance and Office of Management, I was ecstatic and ready to take my education to the next step toward gaining a well-rounded understanding of the role FDA plays in ensuring safety and efficacy of drugs. Not only was I fortunate enough to obtain a rotation with the FDA, but I also had the amazing opportunity to extend it from a 6-week rotation to 12-week rotation, to further deepen my understanding of the FDA and make a positive impact on the work that is done. Now, to delve deeper into my experience, it is important to note that my rotation was virtual and in the Office of Manufacturing Quality (OMQ) and Office of Management. My mentors and preceptors guiding me through the rotation were Dr. Tri Le and LCDR Tramara Dam.

I entered my FDA rotation with the baseline knowledge of how the FDA regulates clinical trials as well as oversees the approval of investigational new drugs. The Office of Manufacturing Quality equipped me with the knowledge of compliance and enforcement policies that are utilized to enforce current good manufacturing practices, such as the issuance of warning letters and initiation of regulatory meetings to facilities with significant violations, in addition to mitigating and preventing drug shortages. The Office of Management equipped me with the knowledge of FDA User Fee Programs and how they accelerate innovation in the pharmaceutical industry. Not only did my projects aid in expanding that knowledge of the role of FDA, but also provided opportunities to attend student lectures and connect with FDA personnel via 1 on 1 meetings, allowing me to gain a thorough understanding of how the FDA as an agency upholds safety and efficacy of the foods and drugs that are consumed by the public. The structured FDA student program along with the welcoming and friendly nature of each person I had the pleasure of meeting further showcases the importance each employee places in ensuring each student has an educationally beneficial time in learning the roles FDA can offer to pharmacists.

Along with the knowledge I gained, I appreciated the initiative my preceptors had taken in contributing to my professional growth. I had the opportunity to self-reflect and fully verbalize on a weekly basis the



Razina Pathan, Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate, Class of 2023,

APPE Rotation at the Catawba Service Unit

Submitted by Ms. Shelby Powell, PharmD Candidate 2023
 Presbyterian College School of Pharmacy, Clinton, SC
 Preceptor Francisco Antigua, Pharm.D., BCPS



Mrs. Powell volunteering at a blood pressure clinic at the Catawba Reservation Senior Center. (Rock Hill, SC)

diabetes educator at the site on multiple occasions. She and I collaborated to develop a presentation for the healthcare personnel at the clinic on blood pressure management. Additionally, I worked with her in helping counsel diabetic patients on nutrition and food choices, as well as glucose control. I was able to get hands-on experience in a vaccination clinic by administering shots to ensure all patients were up to date on their vaccinations. While at the site, I was afforded the opportunity to attend a class on basic tobacco cessation for Native Americans. Upon completion of the course, I was able to use the skills I learned to help patients with cessation techniques and follow-ups. Also, I was able to attend a retirement event for one of the physicians who worked at the clinic. While there, I witnessed some members of the tribe play a farewell tune on the drums as part

“It is over an hour drive!” they said. Looking back, I am so glad that I chose to complete a rotation at the Catawba Service Unit in Rock Hill, SC. This rotation was very unique and exposed me to many opportunities that I had never experienced at any other rotation. I was excited for the opportunity to care for the members of the Catawba tribe and learn more about their culture and amazing traditions.

The health clinic on site was composed of an interdisciplinary team that offered dental, pharmacy, nutrition, podiatry, vaccination, and ambulatory care services. In addition, there were specialties in diabetes, hypertension, and smoking cessation. During my time at the clinic, I counseled many patients on their medications, and also helped answer drug information requests from the providers. I had the privilege of working with and alongside the nutritionist and certified



Mrs. Powell and Mrs. Ruiz on rotation's last day.

The Opportunity of a Lifetime

Submitted by: Michael Kim, Pharm.D. Candidate 2023

Preceptors: Tri Le, Pharm.D. and LCDR Tramara Dam, Pharm.D., BCSCP, BS, GWCPM



Michael Kim, Pharm.D. Candidate 2023, University of Southern California

This rotation has been one of the most rewarding and insightful experiences of my pharmacy career. Having the ability to meet and work alongside such established and amazing people, inside and outside of the Office of Manufacturing Quality and Office of Management, has been such an invaluable experience. Students may be understandably discouraged that the rotation was held online, but this only opens the door for endless opportunity for professional and personal development and growth.

During my time at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), I worked under Dr. Tri Le and LCDR Tramara Dam in the CDER Office of Manufacturing Quality (OMQ) and Office of Management (OM). Not only did I learn about the various roles and significant importance of OMQ and OM, but I also gained a deeper understanding of how the FDA functions as a whole. Furthermore, I gained such invaluable guidance and insight from each and every professional encounter throughout this experience. Thus, I strongly encourage any and all students to do the following to make the most out of their rotation: hit the ground running, be genuinely curious, expand your network and establish relationships through your 1:1's, attend student lectures, join office specific meetings, explore projects inside and outside of your office, and don't forget to take notes along the way!

Notably, the 1:1 meetings have been one of the most invaluable experiences during my FDA advanced pharmacy practice experience rotation. From these, I was able to meet incredible individuals and learn about their pharmacy journey along with their current roles and responsibilities in depth. Furthermore, they were more than happy to provide career advice and referrals to other professionals who may help me achieve my goals. As you will come to experience, everyone here at the FDA is very friendly and open to meeting you. They will go out of their way to ensure that you are receiving the experience you desire and support you in any way they can. It truly meant a lot to know that professionals of all levels, regardless of title and busy schedules, would still reach out and provide any resources and/or guidance to help foster my growth.

The old saying goes, "What you put into it, is what you get out of it." Remember, this opportunity as a student may only come once in a lifetime, so do your best! Honestly, your time here will fly by so quickly. Be proactive, stay curious, and learn as much as possible. The only gripe I have is that I wished I had more time to explore and learn here, but as you'll come to find, there simply just isn't enough time.

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Fall/Winter 2022

More Than an Internship: JRCOSTEP Offers Pharmacy Student Opportunities for Hands-on Learning and Career Mentorship

Submitted by Ms. Anna Skarphol PharmD Candidate 2024

This past summer, I had the opportunity to complete a 7-week JRCOSTEP internship at the White Earth Health Center in Ogema, MN on the White Earth Indian Reservation. I first found out about the opportunity to apply for a JRCOSTEP during the summer of 2021, when I was able to spend four weeks in Belcourt, ND at the Quentin N. Burdick Memorial Hospital. During my pharmacy rotation with the Indian Health Service (IHS) in Belcourt, I was able to shadow clinical pharmacists and saw first-hand the positive impact that they were able to have on the health and well-being of the patients that they served. The pharmacists in Belcourt challenged me to step out of my comfort zone, and by the end of my rotation, I was confidently counseling patients on their medications as well as conducting visits with anticoagulation patients and managing their therapy accordingly.

After leaving Belcourt, I knew that I wanted to expand my horizons and see what other opportunities were available for pharmacy students in the Public Health Service (PHS). This led me to apply for the JRCOSTEP internship program with the IHS. I was placed at the White Earth Health Center, which provides primary care for tribal members through a “patient centered medical home” approach. I had the opportunity to shadow pharmacists as they met with patients and managed chronic disease states, such as Type 2 Diabetes, Tobacco Cessation, Hypertension, Anticoagulation, and Hepatitis C. The pharmacists included me in their clinical decision-making process, and I was able to put knowledge that I had learned at school into practice.

When I wasn't shadowing pharmacists, I spent my time filling prescriptions, answering patient phone calls, completing medication refill requests and so much more! The pharmacy staff ensured that I was comfortable and confident in each of my roles within the pharmacy, and they were always willing to answer any questions I might have had – whether the questions were pharmacy related or not. My precepting pharmacist even took extra time out of his day to talk with me about personal finance, pharmacy career paths, and residency options within the PHS.

The hands-on learning opportunities and career guidance that I received during my JRCOSTEP gave me confidence to hit the ground running this fall at school and to dream big about what kind of career I want to have in pharmacy. With a wide array of opportunities for pharmacy students, including advanced pharmacy rotations with the IHS, FDA, CDC, and Bureau of Prisons, I know that I will be able to widen my horizons and find a rewarding career in the PHS that is right for me!



Anna Skarphol, PharmD Candidate 2024

NDSU

COLLEGE OF
HEALTH PROFESSIONS

A Summer at CDER

Submitted by: Samiha Tamboo, Pharm.D. Candidate 2024

Preceptors: Tri Le, Pharm.D. and LCDR Tramara Dam, Pharm.D., BCSCP, BS, GWCPM

It was June 17th, 2022- the last day of my introductory pharmacy practice experiences hospital rotation at a rehabilitation center in Central Jersey. After just 4 weeks, I felt as though I had formed a lasting bond with the tight knit pharmacy staff who had welcomed me into their workspace. As I wrapped up my rotation, I came to a realization- pharmacy school is a series of endings and beginnings. Each semester a batch of classes ends, and a new group replaces them, just as the seasons replace each other. As we travel to the next class or rotation cycle, we hope to pick up pieces of wisdom along the way. It was the end of my rotation and the beginning of summer- how would the next episode of this new season play out?

June 21st was my first day at the Office of Manufacturing Quality (OMQ) under the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) Office of Compliance. The juxtaposition between June 17th and June 21st reminded me of the reason I chose to pursue pharmacy- at the rehabilitation center I had the chance to explore the extensive drug regimens of individuals in both long-term and short-term care and to prepare their medications; the following week I began learning about Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMP), warning letters, import alerts, and regulatory meetings. While these two settings seem very different, the underlying motivation is the same- in pharmacy, we strive to protect and improve people's health whether it is on the direct patient care level or on a larger, public health directed scale.

As the first OMQ Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) Fellow in a few years, I felt honored to have been selected to fulfill this role and to learn more about the inner workings of the FDA as a rising P3 pharmacy student. In the classroom, our discussions of FDA centered around the drug development process and the overall emphasis on safety and efficacy with respect to new drugs. Additionally, through previous industry internships, I had begun to explore the regulatory and real-world evidence side of things. However, this summer, I am thankful to have had the opportunity to dig deeper and understand the perspective of the FDA from the inside.



Samiha Tamboo, Pharm.D. Candidate 2024

Rutgers University, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy

Over the course of my fellowship, I learned about the importance of CGMPs to ensure that drug products are appropriate for distribution in the US market. Additionally, I learned about the importance of exercising regulatory discretions to mitigate potential drug shortages. Aside from the technical knowledge I was able to come by at OMQ, I think some of the most valuable takeaways are intangible. Practicing soft skills such as collaboration with other students, networking, and delivering presentations are vital regardless of the setting one may find themselves in. My advice to fellow students would be to constantly reflect on one's professional development and keep notes throughout any new internship or rotation experiences so that you can look back at your progress each step of the way.

I especially enjoyed setting up one-on-one meetings with individuals from different areas of CDER. In retrospect, all the dedicated individuals that I spoke with had one goal in common- their collective efforts are for the purpose of protecting public health and making a difference on a high level, which is what drew me

Community Outreach on the Qualla Boundary

Submitted by Serena Medor, P4 Student, Howard University College of Pharmacy, Washington DC, Linda Allworth, P4 Student, UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, Chapel Hill, NC, and Nomathamsanqa Mgutshini, P4 Student, East Tennessee State University Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy, Johnson City, TN
Preceptors: LT Saleena Brownell, PharmD, BCPS, CPP and CDR Eric Metterhausen, PharmD, BCPS, CPP, CPH



LT Saleena Brownell, PharmD, BCPS, CCP, 4th year pharmacy students Nomathamsanqa Mgutshini, and Linda Allworth, CDR Eric Metterhausen, PharmD, BCPS, CCP, CPH, and CIHA PGY-I Pharmacy Resident LT Madeline Wright, PharmD

Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority (CIHA) is a family practice-based hospital and clinic located on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian Reservation in western North Carolina. It serves approximately 14,000 Native Americans across a five-county area through a variety of programs funded and operated through both the Indian Health Service and the Tribal Health Delivery System. CIHA hosts approximately 40 APPE students from 8 different Colleges of Pharmacy each year. In the month of October, three pharmacy students from Howard University College of Pharmacy, East Tennessee State University Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy, and UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy had the opportunity to volunteer at a mass COVID and flu vaccine clinic at the 110th Annual Cherokee Indian Fair Elder's Day and Veteran's Day events. In collaboration with Eastern Band-Cherokee Indians (EBCI) Tsalagi Public Health, students were able to vaccinate around 60 patients with

the new COVID-19 Bivalent vaccines. Over the course of two days, students helped with the preparation and administration of the vaccine to patients. The clinic had both the Moderna and Pfizer bivalent doses. Students also educated the patients on the side effects that can be seen with the new vaccines. Below they provided their perspective on their experiences:

I liked being able to interact with the community, which was a different experience than seeing them in the pharmacy. The members of the community were personable and easy to talk to, and they cared to get to know their immunizer even if it was just for a couple minutes. I was able to learn more about the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians- something that is not necessarily well known. I was able to improve on my vaccination technique, which has allowed me to be more comfortable with administering vaccines.

-Serena Medor, P4 Student, Howard University College of Pharmacy, Washington DC

I was very happy to participate as a volunteer at the clinic. I enjoyed interacting with members of the community and learning more about their culture and heritage on Elder's Day and Veteran's Day. The patients that we served appreciated being vaccinated. The hands-on experience enhanced my skills. I am more comfortable with drawing up vaccine doses and administering vaccines. I was excited to administer vaccines to patients to help protect them and other members in the community from



Fourth year pharmacy students Nomathamsanqa Mgutshini, Serena Medor, and Linda Allworth on APPE rotations at Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority

Navigating the Navajo Nation

Submitted by Student Pharmacist O-I, Rena Reid

When I left for my first year of college at the University of Pittsburgh, it was the furthest I had been away from home. Pittsburgh, PA is not much different from Rochester, NY, but knowing my parents would be five hours away was enough to leave me homesick. I can pinpoint the moment I knew I would miss my family. It was time for my parents to head home. Within the instant they gave a final hug, tears started flowing along my cheeks. This feeling returned once again as I was leaving my station in Gallup, NM.

Not only was I able to explore my current passions in the field of pharmacy at Gallup Indian Medical Center, but I had opportunities to step out of my comfort zone to find further interests. I knew I wanted to explore the Navajo community by working in outpatient settings. This expectation was fulfilled while being academically challenged. Shadowing in the anticoagulation, diabetes, asthma, and alcohol and substance abuse program clinics showed me how to apply the knowledge learned within classrooms to community settings. For example, attempting to process the role of direct-oral-anticoagulants in cardiology lectures was *brutal*, but the pharmacists in the clinic provided me with the resources to make the material navigable. Outside of working with patients, I was able to help the pharmacy by updating their hazardous drug policies to ensure they were up-to-date and complete with USP 800 standards of care. This was the first project I completed as a pharmacy student. It was both nerve-racking and exciting being trusted with the responsibility of determining safety protocols of hazardous drugs, but several pharmacists welcomed me with open arms to approach them with any questions.

Most of my time was spent with these same pharmacists: enjoying lunch, visiting festivals and markets, eating (too much) fried bread, playing Frisbee, attending bible study, and hiking. I did not recognize the impact Gallup culture and community had impressed upon me until it was time to go. Like college move-in day, it was the last embrace from my newfound friends that led to the tears. In a short-time, Gallup became my home and the pharmacists became my friends. Luckily, this will not be the last time I visit the mighty Navajo Nation. With the connections I was able to make during this internship, I will return for rotations where I hope to expand and implement work to help further the impact of the clinics.



Rena Reid, PharmD Candidate Class of 2024, University of Pittsburgh

Fall/Winter 2022

An Oklahoma Hub of Opportunity: Clinton Service Unit (CSU)

Submitted by Ms. Abigail Thibodeaux

As the JRCOSTEP at Clinton IHS Service Unit in Clinton, Oklahoma, I was provided many opportunities to utilize clinical knowledge and grow in the realm of primary care practices by assisting clinical pharmacists as well as physicians. From the beginning of my call to active duty, the Chief of Pharmacy, CDR Narcisso Soliz, encouraged me to find my niche and budget time to complete innovative projects that would be unique and rewarding moving forward. Not only did I spend much time in the primary care clinic talking to and growing relationships with patients each day to help enhance my skills as a future clinical pharmacist, but I also was able to contribute to new standards of practice at the Clinton Service Unit. This location in IHS certainly provided autonomy for me as a learner, educator, and possible future administrator. Each month, IPPE pharmacy students rotated through our location, allowing me to showcase opportunities available in our clinic and IHS in general. Many students were interested in working for IHS after spending time with us in the clinic; I even assisted in developing another student's resume, who applied for our intern position at the end of his rotation.

Daily tasks including performing medication reconciliation on each patient, to help increase the quality of our patient care. I also worked with our tobacco cessation clinic pharmacist, LCDR Julie Boese, making initial visits as well as follow-up calls and visits with our patients, contributing to a 46% quit-rate in our program (>20% above the national average). I developed a method, based on 2022 guidelines, for evaluating a patient chart and determining eligibility for statin therapy. This approach was applied to over 130 patient charts, documented and addressed to the primary care physician. The outcome of this project resulted in appropriate patients being prescribed statin therapy as a result of pharmacy-physician collaboration. This project encompassed all three local IHS Service Units including Watonga, El Reno, and Clinton.

Throughout my time, I was also involved in other ongoing projects. I spent time updating our pharmacy clinic resources for diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and other chronic conditions in efforts to successfully re-create a Chronic Disease State Management (CDM) clinic in Clinton. The CDM clinic is now active, allowing pharmacists to collaborate with physicians in managing chronic disease states. I was also able to contribute to National HIV Awareness Day by providing patient education resources as well as free HIV OraQuick test kits or lab orders for patients, alongside clinical pharmacist LCDR Cassandra Clark, who manages our Hepatitis C and HIV patient care. Additionally, pharmacist LT Amanda Haggard allowed me to help write for our monthly Clinton Newsletter. I wrote 12 excerpts, providing patient education information about commonly prescribed medications. During the final two weeks of my JRCOSTEP, CSU was preparing for a Joint Commission audit, which demanded a change in clinic practices for safety prior to COVID-19. We participated in a



(Left to right) Clinical pharmacist and LCDR Cassandra Clark, clinical pharmacist and LCDR Julie Boese, and JRCOSTEP Abigail Thibodeaux

Indian Health Service Pharmacy Residencies: A Great Start to a Great USPHS Career!

Submitted by LT Joseph Nnani, PharmD, MBA

Prior to my acceptance into the pharmacy program at Texas A&M University, I knew little to nothing about pharmacy practice in the United States, since I was born and raised in Nigeria. Like many others, I spent the entire four years of my pharmacy education trying to learn about various aspects of pharmacy, in order to identify a niche where I was most interested. My pharmacy school provided opportunities for various individuals to come speak to us about their pharmacy practice setting. It was through this means that I received an introduction to the United States Public Health Service (USPHS).

Before pharmacy, I studied public health for three years and was very excited with this subject. I also had an immense interest in serving as a uniformed officer, but struggled with finding a service unit that aligned seamlessly with my career goals. Upon listening to the USPHS officer speak, my interest in this career path immediately piqued.

My biggest challenge was reconciling my thirst to seek out more knowledge through residency training, and pursuing a career with the USPHS. I desired to become an ambulatory care specialist, practicing at the top of my license through collaborative care with other providers. While completing my Postgraduate Year one (PGY-1) training, I learned of an opportunity to complete an ambulatory care Postgraduate Year two residency (PGY-2) with the Indian Health Service (IHS), and a pathway to commission with the USPHS. This, of course, was the perfect opportunity for me to converge all my interests into one career path.

Upon matching with the Northern Navajo Medical Center IHS PGY-2 residency program, I began my journey with the USPHS. I was specifically looking for a PGY-2 residency program that would provide me with the best opportunity to practice independently, as well as provide me with the experience to manage various disease states. I was particularly excited about my residency program with the IHS as it provided me with an array of opportunities to grow. I was able to rotate in various clinics such as Epilepsy, Specialty (HIV and Hepatitis C), Chronic Disease Management, Anticoagulation and Walk-In (urgent care) clinics. I particularly loved the Walk-In clinic where pharmacists are trained to assess, diagnose and treat multiple different acute conditions. This is something I had never imagined was possible. The IHS continues to push the boundaries of pharmacy practice in a positive way, and I am grateful to experience that. I believe through this residency program, I have grown exponentially both professionally and clinically.

Within the IHS, there are a lot of Commissioned Corps officers with successful careers. These officers are willing to step in as mentors to help new officers navigate the system in order to have successful USPHS careers. I have been able to grow my professional network and connect with great mentors who continuously push me to be the best version of myself. There are several representations of IHS USPHS officers who have made remarkable contributions to the service. Their impact can be felt throughout the entire US population, and serves as motivation for young officers like myself. The IHS is very patient-focused, with the ultimate goal of being able to provide the best care possible for the patients. I have learned a lot about the American Indian/Alaskan Native populations, and have seen how cultural competence is vital for patient care within IHS facilities.

I consider myself lucky to be in what I perceive as the most ideal career path I could ever imagine. The knowledge, experiences and expertise I have gained are enormously valuable to me. Completing an IHS residency has played an integral role in making this a reality, and I am excited to see what the future holds for me within the USPHS.

The Phoenix Experience: JRCOSTEP Externship

Submitted by Ms. Kristina Lynn P. Catague, Student Pharmacist, USPHS Ensign



(Right Picture Left to Right) CAPT Jing Li, ENS Kristina Lynn Catague, LCDR Janet Cabrales

Opportunities are just a click away. In a time when technology and the internet are rapidly evolving and becoming more prominent, many things have become more accessible. I had briefly heard about the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) before going into pharmacy school, and I later researched their vision, purpose, and programs. I found that it aligned with my values and goals, so I wanted to contribute to their mission – *Protect, promote, and advance the health and safety of the nation!*

The Junior Commissioned Officer Student Training Extern Program (JRCOSTEP) is a highly competitive program that enables student pharmacists to experience the different areas of pharmacy while being supervised by a Commissioned Corps officer of the Public Health Service. Notably, there is no commitment to be a part of the uniformed service as a JRCOSTEP extern. After I was selected, I was assigned to the Phoenix Indian Medical Center (PIMC) as an O-1 officer or Ensign. There, I was assigned to the HIV Clinic, also known as the SAGE Clinic, which is the largest HIV Clinic in all of the Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities.

I was greatly welcomed to Phoenix, not only by the officers and other employees, but also by the Arizona heat. Soon after finishing the required paperwork, I was able to exercise my filling and patient counseling skills at the Specialty Pharmacy. There was a shortage of technicians that day, so I was able to step in and work independently most of the time. It was very similar to a retail pharmacy, except there were more specialized medications for complex conditions!

At the SAGE Clinic, I was supervised by LCDR Janet Cabrales and CAPT Heather Huentelman. I was assigned several projects to help around the clinic, including establishing media and local connections and spreading awareness about HIV PrEP medications. The main project that I was tasked with was a project that required doing chart reviews for women and transgender women living with HIV, to determine their next scheduled Pap smears, mammograms, and pelvic exams. After the completion of my tasks, I presented the current and updated guidelines on the exams. With the looming beginnings of Monkeypox, I was also able to witness the dispensing of Tecovirimat to the first Monkeypox patient in Maricopa County. I was then able to assist in the creation of patient-friendly informational handouts and posters.

At a facility with one of the most pharmacy-led clinics, there are plenty of opportunities to observe and work with pharmacists from different specialties. I was able to observe the pharmacists' role in tobacco cessation. They worked intensively with the pa-

An Essential Experience for Prospective Pharmacists

Submitted by Thomas Le, PharmD Candidate, Class of 2022



CDR Kimberly Davids and LCDR Michelle Barbosa recording the USPHS Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award for the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy recipient

Recruitment of highly qualified candidates is vital to the success and future of our service. One unique pathway to establish relationships and promote the United States Public Health Services (USPHS) is to serve as a faculty member at universities. CDR Davids has had this privilege in collaboration with the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy. As the past University Point of Contact Lead for the University of Kansas School (KU) of Pharmacy and the local student rota-

tion coordinator at Haskell Healthcare in Lawrence Kansas, I felt the impact CDR Davids had on every pharmacy student who came through our program. Our rotation site was highly sought out and this was heavily due to the positive effect CDR Davids had on these students. CDR Davids was kind enough to provide insight on her experience as a KU faculty member through an interview.

LCDR Barbosa: How did you start with teaching at KU and how long have you been doing this?

CDR Davids: In collaboration with another pharmacist, we reached out to the KU school of pharmacy. The initial idea was we could provide an elective in public health. The KU faculty agreed to the proposal and the course took off in the Spring of 2016. I brought in guest lecturers in various arenas of public health. This included representatives from organizations such as Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA), the Indian Health Services (IHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The opportunity to hear about career options in these various organizations sparked lots of interest in the students, but as an elective the course size was capped to 20 students.

LCDR Barbosa: This started as an elective, but I believe this has changed. How did the course get transformed to be a requirement for every pharmacy student?

CDR Davids: In the Summer of 2018, accreditation standards required schools of pharmacy to incorporate public health into their curriculum. As the students consistently enjoyed the course as an elective, I was asked to teach all third-year students in Public Health and Pharmacoepidemiology. Since that time, I have served as the professor of the course each fall, with the class size around 130. To date, I have taught over 500 students in the semester long course.

LCDR Barbosa: This has been a lot of additional work to include in your already busy life, but I know you have also enjoyed this

It's Not the Weather ... continued from [page 4](#)

mountains, a glacier and wildlife. In Denali I was fortunate enough to take a helicopter ride, where I landed on a glacier and was able to get out and walk around, and I even drank melting glacier water. The views were breathtaking in the sky and on the glacier, so I highly recommend a helicopter tour. During my final week at ANMC my family arrived, and we ventured on lots of activities. The most memorable was taking the Alaska Railroad to Seward, then dog sledding and hiking around Exit Glacier. Besides being adventurous, I am a foodie. Anchorage has amazing restaurants with phenomenal halibut entrees. Two of my favorites restaurants are Tent City Taphouse and Bear Paw & Grill.

I am proud to say that I have completed part of my pharmacy education at ANMC. I have learned so much from remarkable pharmacy team members, medical staff and patients. I am very grateful for this experience and hopefully it won't take me another 21 years to return to the beautiful state of Alaska.



My inpatient Experience at Alaska Native Medical Center ... continued from [page 6](#)

for my future patients. At this site, I have been challenged to think critically and have been encouraged to reflect on my own abilities and to embrace new things by getting out of my comfort zone. This rotation has been one of my most memorable and I encourage all pharmacy students to complete a rotation at CNOHC or any other Indian Health Service facility so you can enjoy some of the same experiences I had.



Fall/Winter 2022

The Cherokee Nation Pharmacy Experience... continue from [page 3](#)

different subject matter and enhancing skills in those areas along the way. My peer, Lauren Chastain, and I have expressed additional interest in infectious disease and antibiotic stewardship, for which we were granted time with the infectious disease pharmacist. As for those pursuing a residency, there are plenty of opportunities at Cherokee Nation to ask questions and seek guidance from pharmacists who are current or past residents. Many pharmacists working in the Cherokee Nation pharmacy are former residents, at least 8 of which have been residents within the Cherokee Nation. This site may also provide opportunities to be more involved in things like research projects, which positively affects your residency applications and your curriculum-vitae. As students, we inquired specifically about extra projects and received instructions and guidelines the same day. The flexibility of this site also allowed us to come in early or stay late after clinic work was done, to work up patients and spend time on the project. It is very apparent that the preceptors at this site care immensely about fostering student learning and success. I highly recommend the Cherokee Nation Outpatient Health Center experience!



Pharmacy student Abigail Thibodeaux

A Unique Ambulatory Care Rotation ... continue from [page 10](#)

long commute, that the experience would be worth it. Now, looking back, I can say that it was an experience that I will truly never forget and will always carry with me as I proceed through my pharmacy career.

Opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Federal Bureau of Prisons or the Department of Justice.



It's About the Climb ... continue from [page 13](#)

out of water and questioning my love of hiking about three quarters of the way up the trail. My ego was even further damaged with every man and woman that jogged past me, as if the mountain was nothing more than a pleasant running trail. Then, near the top, I passed a father carrying his two young children. Just as my pride was diminished to nearly nothing, I reached the peak and found myself with a view like nothing I had seen before. And, I was welcomed by mountain goats leisurely grazing on the mountain side. For me, the opportunity to hike in Alaska's breathtaking mountains was worth the long trip from the east coast.

My time in Alaska, both academic and not, is something I will never forget. I feel I have gained invaluable experiences that will shape both the pharmacist and man that I become. To anyone considering a rotation with ANMC, I cannot speak highly enough of the experience I gained and the memories I made.



Alaska Dreamin' ... continue from [page 14](#)

My experience in Alaska and at ANMC was unforgettable. The lessons I have learned from the staff at ANMC will benefit my future practice and my future patients by forming me into a better writer, researcher, pharmacist, and human being. My initial interest in oncology has grown into a passion, and I am excited to gain more experience as a resident. Spending six weeks in Alaska seemed like a daunting adventure at the start. Still, it was an experience I wouldn't trade for anything. I'd recommend anyone who gets the chance to apply for a rotation with ANMC to do so without hesitation!



A Rotation Above the Rest... continue from [page 15](#)

agents to providers and a pharmacokinetics overview and update to pharmacy staff.

Unlike other rotations, my experiences were not limited strictly to pharmacy related activities. I spent a few mornings shadowing a treatment specialist who was implementing a reprogramming initiative through the First Step Act, including group therapy, sanitation rounds and community meetings within a housing unit. Additionally, I was able to tour a few other areas of the prison, my favorite being the art studio. The level of artistic ability within the institution was impressive. Inmates were crafting items from leather purses and wallets to hand painted chess sets. These non-pharmacy related activities were beneficial in providing me with a holistic picture of inmate life and allowed me to better serve incarcerated patients.

I am thankful to LT Flynn and the extraordinary pharmacy team at MCFP Springfield for the unforgettable opportunity. I greatly appreciate the warm welcome, imparting of knowledge and genuine interest in my learning. This experience should not be missed. If you are considering a rotation with the BOP, I highly recommend choosing Springfield, you will not be disappointed!

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Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin' ... continue from [page 16](#)

my letter of recommendation for JRCOSTEP!" Not only did I feel like I knew someone famous, I felt like a full circle had been closed. As a VCU student, in the classroom, I was learning about current therapy best practices, and during the P&T meeting, I was able to see in practice how it was changing the national dialogue on first line diabetes treatment.

My JRCOSTEP experience was successful because it allowed me to work with an underserved patient population that I am interested in working with in the future. I got to work with and meet people from all kinds of backgrounds that I would not have met in my ordinary circle, and I got to see the real-life application of therapy changes driven by best practice research. Not only was it a beautiful mornin', it was a beautiful experience.



Venturing Past my Comfort Zone... continue from [page 17](#)

and I hope one day to grow into a great pharmacist. During my JRCOSTEP I was able to step out of my comfort zone and have had the utmost honor of serving a unique patient population. Helping underserved communities has always been a passion of mine and it will be an honor to continue to do so after graduation with USPHS.



My Path to the Food and Drug ... continue from [page 18](#)

of meeting 25 FDA employees who all had diverse paths to the FDA, but they had one thing in common: belief in the mission. The purpose of protecting the public health was something that truly resonated with me and was inspiring. I woke up every day of my rotation with a renewed purpose to do the best I can. Being from the Midwest, you don't typically hear about FDA employment opportunities. However, spending 6 weeks at FDA showed me the abundance of opportunities that are available to pharmacists. Since I hope to stay in the Midwest after graduation, I was able to discover remote opportunities or work as an inspector through the Office of Regulatory Affairs District Offices.

My advice to any future PSEP students is to be a sponge with absorbing new information, ask a lot of questions, and make the most of your time here. This experience is truly one of a kind.



Fall/Winter 2022

Guaranteed to Grow ... continue from [page 26](#)

agency enough.

For students interested in pursuing a rotation within the FDA, I would advise them to not be afraid and to do it! As someone who doubted whether she would even be granted this opportunity, I can confidently say that most of the time, you are your own harshest critic. Once you realize this, becoming the best version of yourself and growing becomes much easier. If working for the agency is a passion and dream of yours, believe in yourself and do not be afraid to put yourself out there. I encourage students who have passion and curiosity to apply and not shy away from this incredible opportunity. I am always happy to connect with students and pass on the wisdom and knowledge that I have had the privilege to learn from all my dedicated mentors and teachers. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or want to connect. Best of luck to all future student externs!



Pharm D. Careers at the FDA ... continue from [page 28](#)

reviewing first dose selection when a product completes preclinical study to selecting a dose range to study in humans in phase I clinical trials. This position also participates in internal meetings with other FDA disciplines and external sponsors as well. Professionals with PharmDs and PhDs are well-prepared in the background and experiences needed for the position of Clinical Pharmacology Reviewer.

The **Health Scientist** has a role in the Oncology Center of Excellence (OCE). Health Scientists and Health Analysts work on a variety of projects in the OCE under the Office of the Commissioner. The Oncology Center of Excellence is the only center of excellence in the agency and participates in outreach projects and events. For instance, Project Orbis provides a framework for concurrent submission and review of oncology products among international regulatory bodies, with the goal of promoting earlier access to cancer treatments for patients in other countries in addition to the United States.

Ultimately, pharmacists are well-equipped to work in many offices at the FDA. Through my coffee chats with professionals during my FDA externship, I also learned that it is very feasible to transition between offices and explore different roles.

RUTGERS
Ernest Mario School
of Pharmacy

Seize the Opportunity ... continue from [page 29](#)

professional skills I gained and the self-manifested goals achieved. I learned the importance of self-reflection and the importance of implementing it in my daily lifestyle through my time at the FDA, as it allows one to solidify their short-term and long-term goals as well as generate a path to achieve these goals.

Overall, the FDA rotation molds students into pharmacists who have thorough understanding of the roles FDA plays in ensuring the safety of the public. Pharmacists are known as patient advocates and having the capability to understand how the FDA plays a role in advocating for consumer safety further expands the meaning of patient advocacy for pharmacists. My experience as a student rotating in CDER proved to be very beneficial in sharpening my teamwork, communication, and time management skills among other skills. Without a doubt would I recommend this rotation to any pharmacy student considering an FDA rotation because of the multiple opportunities each student has in polishing their professional skills and expanding their horizon on the regulations and enforcement policies that the FDA can implement on companies and facilities.



APPE Rotation at the Catawba... continue from [page 30](#)

of their tradition.

My favorite part of the rotation was when I was able to work with the senior citizens on the reservation. Once, I taught a class on stress and anxiety and offered some non-pharmacological and pharmacological ways to manage them. On another occasion, I conducted a blood pressure clinic for the senior citizens and was able to sit down one on one to discuss their numbers and give them techniques to reduce their blood pressure. The nutritionist set up a cooking competition for the senior citizens and I had the honor of serving as a judge. For the contest, they had to develop several recipes that had to incorporate apples in some way. The winning criteria was based on taste, eye appeal, healthiness, and incorporation of apples. After the contest, I attended the teen center on the reservation to help with the teaching of wellness and cancer prevention to the students.

My main preceptor, LCDR Francisco Antigua, was an essential part of why this rotation was so beneficial. He tailored my assignments and experiences in ways that enabled me to grow as a future pharmacist. He would constantly challenge me in my knowledge as well as decision making to see how I would handle certain situations. He would also give constructive criticism needed it.

This was truly one of the most rewarding experiences that I have had throughout pharmacy school. This rotation will always be a memorable experience for me, and I would highly recommend it to any student!



PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE
SCHOOL of PHARMACY

Fall/Winter 2022

A Summer at CDER ... continue from [page 33](#)

to FDA in the first place.

As the summer slowly turns to fall, I feel that this experience will mold the trajectory of my career path. I aspire to return to FDA after graduating in 2024, and to perhaps explore other areas of the Department of Health and Human Services during my APPE rotations next school year. Of all the endings and beginnings in pharmacy school so far, this one leaves me with a fresh perspective and piqued curiosity to delve deeper. My advice to fellow students would be to approach each new beginning with an open mind, carrying on freshly acquired skills and knowledge to each new season- in pharmacy school and beyond.

Special thanks to the kind individuals at FDA/CDER/OC/OMQ for investing their time into this worthwhile experience and mentoring me every step of the way.



Community Outreach on the Qualla Boundary ... continue from [page 34](#)

severe illness. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve.

-Nomathamsanqa Mgutshini, P4 Student, East Tennessee State University Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy, Johnson City, TN

It was a wonderful experience to volunteer at the vaccine clinic. I think that it was perfect that our clinic days coincided with the Cherokee Indian Fair's celebration of Elders and Veterans, as those populations are important to keep up to date with vaccinations. Many patients commented on how our clinic made it convenient for them to receive the new COVID-19 bivalent vaccine. I was happy to see so many patients wanting to be vaccinated for both COVID-19 and flu as we approach the winter months and move through flu season. This was a valuable opportunity to serve the community while continuing to improve on my vaccination technique. I'll never forget some of the amazing patients I got a chance to interact with!

-Linda Allworth, P4 Student, UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, Chapel Hill, NC

CIHA is proud to provide a variety of educational learning experiences including ambulatory care, medical inpatient, behavioral health inpatient, a unique counseling experience, anticoagulation, tobacco cessation, special projects, community service, and more. Students are provided with USPHS education and mentorship from 12 pharmacy officers. Students also have the opportunity to learn about the culture of the Eastern Band Cherokee Indians during their stay on the Qualla Boundary.



Fall/Winter 2022

An Oklahoma Hub of Opportunity ... continue from [page 36](#)

mock-survey from IHS Area Office, providing opportunities for IPPE students to answer questions and receive feedback in the process. There were positive remarks made in writing about students and interns accurately reciting rules and regulations, indicating that we are on the right track when orienting interns.

A hallmark of my COSTEP happened in July when pharmacists obtained the authority to prescribe Paxlovid. LCDR Soliz prompted me to thoroughly read and understand the EUA, then draft a competency exam for our clinical pharmacists based on other competency exams used in our clinic. Afterwards, we collaborated with our IT-department to create a new Resource Patient Management System (RPMS) template for pharmacists to utilize as a guide when documenting use of Paxlovid. These are just a few examples of unique opportunities at IHS Clinton. Because being a COSTEP is multifaceted, I created a detailed document called "Roles and Responsibilities of Pharmacy Interns" for Clinton's future COSTEP students to utilize in the future. Overall, the IHS Clinton Pharmacy provided a well-rounded experience in my 8-weeks as a JRCOSTEP and I am grateful for the opportunity. I would recommend this area for other students interested in advancing clinical skills, gaining outpatient pharmacy experience, being an integrative part of a tight-knit healthcare team, and innovating developmental projects!



The Phoenix Experience ... continue from [page 38](#)

tient through medication therapy management and lifestyle modifications to fight off the chronic condition of commercial nicotine dependence. I was also able to observe the anticoagulation clinic under Dr. Lauren Mukes, where I got to apply what I had learned about warfarin bridging therapy from school into real practice. In addition to what the pharmacotherapy pharmacists offered, I also saw the importance of connecting with patients, understanding their situations, and accommodating them to ensure they receive optimal therapy.

I met many amazing, enthusiastic, and accomplished individuals who were willing to be a resource while I work towards my career. CAPT Catherine Witte was able to share the importance of understanding the cultural and spiritual aspects of American Indians and Native Americans while providing medical care. LCDR Janet Cabrales and CAPT Heather Huentelman were excellent mentors as they guided me through my projects with the SAGE Clinic. CAPT Jing Li ensured that my fellow JRCOSTEPs and I had a comfortable stay in Phoenix and connected us with the right individuals for us to maximize our experience as junior officers in USPHS.

Completing this externship felt like I fulfilled a vision. My mother saw what the Commissioned Corps had to offer for future pharmacists and noted it down in her journal, which I found eleven years later! I am extremely proud to say that I was a JRCOSTEP USPHS Officer, and that I was able to experience a side of pharmacy like no other. I strongly recommend student pharmacists to seek opportunities like this. This is your sign to click that apply button!



UT Tyler **FISCH**
COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

USPHS recruitment at 2022 LECOM ... continue from page 25

her role as a communications specialist at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Health Service Corps (IHSC) and her previous jobs as a chief pharmacist and staff pharmacist in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. LCDR Williams shared her experience as a U.S. Food and Drug Administration project manager and her past experience working at IHS and IHSC.

We also talked about the benefits of working in the uniformed services: medical, dental, and vision benefits; life insurance; 30-day annual leave starting the first year of active duty; not needing a pharmacy residency or fellowship to apply to USPHS; accession bonus; and loan repayment programs at IHS. In addition, we discussed being able to practice with an unrestricted license. For example, a pharmacist may have a Maryland license but practice in a federal agency in Arizona.

There were several inquiries from the pharmacy students on the USPHS application process. We each relayed our experiences applying to USPHS and echoed in unison how long the application process was (one to two years). We advised students to be resilient as well as seek other job opportunities while waiting for their applications to be processed by Commissioned Corps Headquarters and called to active duty.

As LCDR Williams is a LECOM alumnus, it was an especially enjoyable and surreal experience for her to speak to the students about her career path and different careers within the USPHS. Special acknowledgement goes to CDR Tamy Leung and CDR Yvon Yeo for their contributions in making the LECOM virtual career day a success.



Teaching and Recruiting... continue from page 39

journey. What has been the most rewarding aspect of this experience?

CDR Davids: Seeing the positive impact on those I teach and establishing relationships with them. Students reach back out to me years later and will explain how much this course meant to them. One specific student was accepted into the prestigious George Washington MPH program. It is humbling to hear that this course paved the way for her career choices. I've also enjoyed connecting students to other USPHS officers for opportunities across the country.

The start of this elective program has opened more opportunities for me professionally as well. It started small as an elective limited to 20 students and grew to a requirement for every student attending KU School of Pharmacy. For the past three years, I was asked by the Associate Dean of the Wichita Campus to speak with the first-year class in the introduction to pharmacy course work where I've had the ability to provide insight on career options within the USPHS. I was also invited to serve on the Dean's council. On this KU pharmacy advisory council, our committee explores options on how to recruit candidates to clinical pharmacy.

LCDR Barbosa: CDR Davids, you have inspired me in many ways, but specifically with your work and collaboration with KU. What would your advice be for others who are interested in teaching at pharmacy schools?

CDR Davids: Have confidence that we are the subject matter experts on opportunities within the USPHS. There is interest from pharmacy schools to provide information on various career options for their students. Have an idea of what you hope to provide to the school. Then work with your university liaisons, the PharmPAC, and the universities to make your dreams a reality.



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Who we are

The Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, or USPHS Commissioned Corps, works on the front lines of public health. Our medical, health and engineering professionals fight disease, conduct research, and care for patients in underserved communities across the nation and throughout the world.

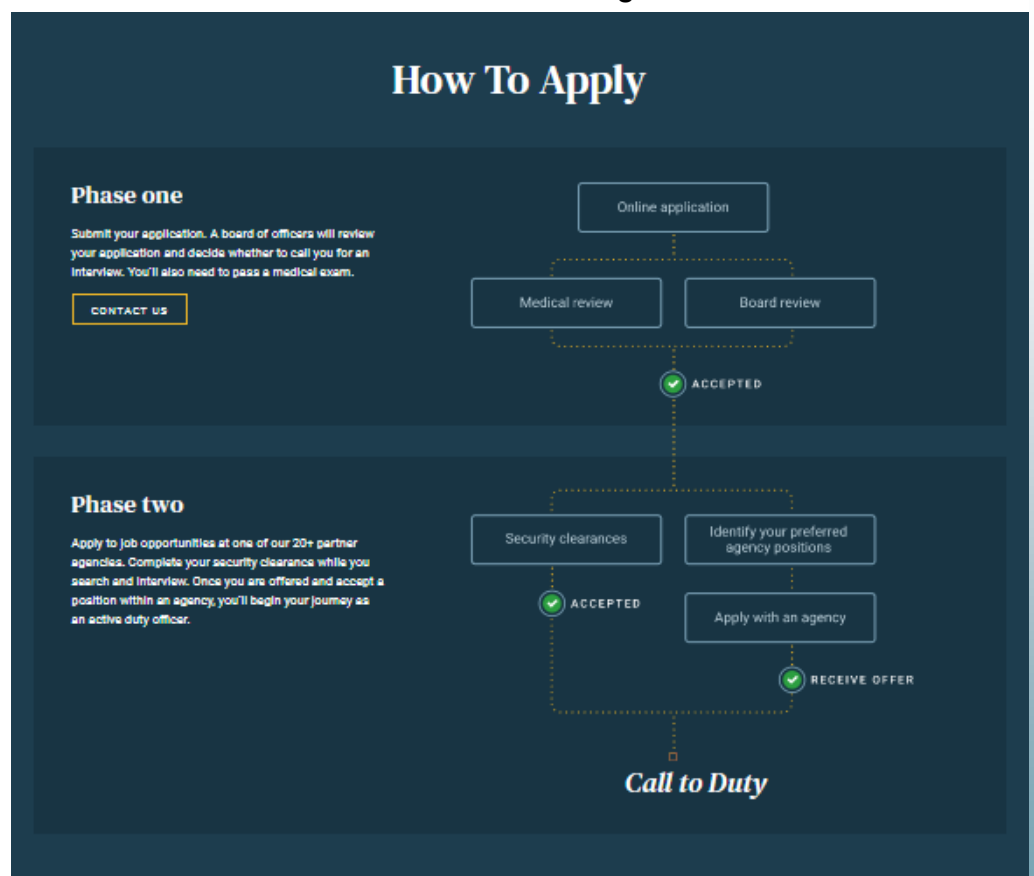
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The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law on March 27, 2020 provides both the authority and funding for the establishment of the Ready Reserve Corps. The USPHS Commissioned Corps will accept Ready Reserve Corps applications online beginning in Fall 2020, and will commission its first officers in Spring 2021.

The USPHS Commissioned Corps is looking for service-driven individuals who desire to work in public health programs and clinical settings. The USPHS Commissioned Corps is an all-officer uniformed service of public health professionals from various public health and medical disciplines. The USPHS Commissioned Corps is comprised of officers from 11 distinct professional categories: Dietitian, Health Service Officer, Environmental Health Officer, Pharmacist, Scientist, Engineer, Therapist, Veterinarian, Physician, Dentist, and Nurse.

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Fall/Winter 2022

Useful Info and Resource Links

Agency	Contact	Telephone	Website	Email
<u>Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP)</u>	<u>CDR Daniel True</u>	<u>304-379-5390</u>	<u>https://www.bop.gov/jobs/positions/index.jsp?p=Pharmacist</u>	<u>dtrue@bop.gov</u>
<u>Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention</u>	<u>CDR Jennifer N. Lind</u>	<u>404-498-4339</u>	<u>https://jobs.cdc.gov</u>	<u>jlind@cdc.gov</u>
<u>Food and Drug Administration (FDA)</u>	<u>CAPT Beth Fritsch</u>	<u>301-796-8451</u>	<u>www.fda.gov</u>	<u>beth.fritsch@fda.hhs.gov</u>
<u>Health Resources & Svcs Adm. (HRSA)</u>	<u>CDR Jane McLaughlin</u>	<u>301- 443-1603</u>	<u>www.hrsa.gov</u>	<u>JMcLaughlin@HRSA.gov</u>
<u>Indian Health Service (IHS)</u>	<u>CDR Jessica Anderson</u>	<u>218-983-6361</u>	<u>www.ihs.gov/pharmacy</u>	<u>Jessi-ca.Anderson@ihs.gov</u>
<u>ICE Health Services Corps (IHSC)</u>	<u>CAPT Jeff Haug</u>	<u>202-494-8081</u>	<u>https://www.ice.gov/detain/ice-health-service-corps</u>	<u>jeff.e.haug@ice.dhs.gov</u>
<u>National Institutes of Health (NIH)</u>	<u>CDR Fortin Georges</u>	<u>301-496-9358</u>	<u>www.nih.gov</u>	<u>georgesf@cc.nih.gov</u>
<u>U.S. Coast Guard</u>	<u>CDR Christopher Janik</u>	<u>202-475-5171</u>	<u>www.uscg.mil</u>	<u>Christo-pher.Janik@uscg.mil</u>
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Website	Web Address
Instagram/Twitter	<u>#usphspharmacy</u>
Facebook Page	<u>www.facebook.com/USPHSPharmacists</u>
IHS Residency Information	<u>http://www.ihs.gov/medicalprograms/pharmacy/resident/</u>
Uniform Information	<u>https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/hso/sub-readiness-uniforms.aspx</u>
USPHS Commissioned Corps	<u>https://www.usphs.gov/</u>
USPHS Commissioned Corps PharmPAC Website	<u>https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/pharmacy/</u>
USPHS Commissioned Corps Pharmacist Listservs	<u>https://dcp.psc.gov/OSG/pharmacy/listserv.aspx</u>
USPHS Commissioned Corps Student Opportunities	<u>https://www.usphs.gov/student/</u>





U. S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps
Protecting, Promoting, and Advancing the Health and Safety of our Nation.

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Provides vision and purpose in public health through inspiration, dedication, and loyalty

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Demonstrates a commitment to public health through compassionate actions and stewardship of time, resources, and talents

Integrity

Exemplifies uncompromising ethical conduct and maintains the highest standards of responsibility and accountability

Excellence

Exhibits superior performance and continues improvement in knowledge and expertise

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The UPOC Newsletter is potentially read by the 1,276 subscribers to the PHS-pharmacists listserv and over 767 subscribers on the pharmacy student listserv. In total, there are over 2,000 readers of the UPOC newsletter. BUT... it's up to you to distribute. Please take the time to distribute the UPOC Newsletter to your Universities or take a colored copy for your Career Fair Recruitment table.

Thank you from the UPOC Newsletter Workgroup!

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