

**University of California San Diego, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Community Pharmacy Preceptors Conference, 1/26/2010**

**Notes**

**Student Intern Jobs:**

The school has received feedback from the students regarding intern hours. They report that both intern jobs and volunteer opportunities are increasingly difficult to find, and that they're struggling to meet the minimum hours requirement.

Conference attendees responded that intern jobs are always available, but the locations of these opportunities may be deemed inconvenient and too far away for takers; less desirable locations often go unfilled. The pharmacists view intern hours as an excellent recruiting tool for their respective pharmacies and therefore, they have not lessened the number of opportunities, in fact, Target Pharmacy reports an *increase* in payroll, not a decrease. Perhaps the market is over-saturated with students as more and more schools of pharmacy are created, thereby increasing the pharmacy student population. Another consideration is marrying the pharmacy's scheduling needs with the student's availability. Many times, pharmacies are unable to take a student because schedules don't match. Another theory is that UCSD's push towards residencies rather than community pharmacy jobs may play a role.

One Potential Opportunity: Develop administrative residencies with community pharmacies. Dr. Grace Kuo, SSPPS faculty member, coordinates the Practice-Based Research Network which could provide a potential solution to this problem.

**4<sup>th</sup>-Year Community Pharmacy Requirement:**

Currently, students are minimally required to complete 10 rotation days at a community pharmacy during their fourth year. The 10 days are divided into two sections of five days each (the last five days of each of their two Ambulatory Care rotations) and are most likely not done at the same community pharmacy. All of the pharmacists present at the conference unanimously agree that this structure lacks in several important ways.

Ten days is simply not enough time for students to learn, use and master the material. The structure has a feel of a crash course in Community Pharmacy; they learn the broader topics, but don't get into much depth, nor do they have time to put the new knowledge to practical use. It's just enough time for exposure, but no hands-on. One suggestion was made to institute a community pharmacy experience screening: Students who have little or no community pharmacy experience should be required to take a full 6-week Community Pharmacy rotation, and the students remaining need only take the 10 days.

Pharmacists working at a community pharmacy are the first or front line. There is no health care team on which to fall back, e.g., doctors and nurses. This presents a great opportunity for students to develop relationships with their patients, critical thinking skills, and independent & self-reliant behaviors. Unfortunately, 10 days is not enough time to fully develop these opportunities.

**Panelists and their rotation practices:**

**Chris Woo, Walgreens Pharmacy:** As a preceptor, Dr. Woo puts himself in his student's shoes, remembering that each student arrives with different goals and objectives in mind. Adapting to each student's needs and remaining flexible is critical to precepting success. In order to establish trusting, caring and meaningful relationships with their patients, he emphasizes that they are to be treated as family. His site services Hospice, hosts Diabetes and Blood Pressure screenings and conducts immunizations. The Hillcrest site specializes in HIV. He gives his students homework geared to help them prepare for the boards. For example, he'll assign one chapter from the OTC Handbook each night and then review it with them the next day. He also sends them to the sales floor to gain experience in direct patient care where they talk with the customers/patients regarding OTC decisions. He expects them to review brand/generic names each night as well, learning their names and interactions with each other.

Mock interviews are practiced to help the student refine their interviewing skills. Learning the store software is a low priority on the to-do list, as each store uses different software. At the end of the rotation, the student gives a presentation on a selected topic, such as medication classes.

***Guy Whetstone, Target Pharmacy:*** When precepting students, Dr. Whetstone focuses on three major areas: Patient Counseling, Leadership Development and Business Administration. The primary focus is on patient counseling - getting the students comfortable communicating with patients and their OTC choices, which he does by frequently sending them to the sales floor. Leadership development is the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority and an important concept in being a pharmacist. Interns lead other interns and students, and all of them review the 14 leadership character traits which they discuss with him afterwards. He uses key books such as “The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People”. Finally, he believes it’s important for every pharmacist to be aware of the business side of pharmacy. Thus, he reviews profit/loss statements, inventory management and other business aspects related to the trade. Creating this foundation could help the student pharmacists realize potential opportunities, such as opening their own independent pharmacy.

***Gary Thomas, Rite-Aid Pharmacy:*** For Dr. Thomas, a hands-on approach is the ideal method for helping students learn. They do what he does and they shadow him no matter where he’s going or what he’s doing. The rotation starts with reviewing pharmacy workflow and continues with organization, dispensing, policies & procedures, legal regulations, quality assurance and patient counseling. When counseling patients, the emphasis is on taking the student’s book knowledge and using it in a practical sense to help the patient. He’s found that the students are eager to talk directly with the patients, and so he lets them. Other focus areas include problem-solving (dose verification, drug interactions, etc.), inventory management, administrative functions such as scheduling, law review, classes of drugs and OTC review which involves walking down the aisles discussing each one. His site hosts diabetes screenings and immunizations; the Hillcrest site is HIV specialized.

***Panteha Kelly, UCSD Internal Medicine Group:*** On the first rotation day, Dr. Kelly gives each student a form and has them answer the question, “What five goals do you want to accomplish?” She customizes their rotation based on their responses. Areas of focus include disease states, shadowing, set-up & functions of a pharmacy, health insurances and patient counseling. Eliminating jargon and speaking in a way that a layperson can understand is the emphasis regarding patient counseling. Dr. Kelly uses role-play to help with this, acting as a patient and having the student counsel her. She also requires them to write the newsletter for outpatient pharmacists using lay language. OTC availability is limited at her site, but she still covers them as much as possible, using case scenarios to discuss them. The students call patients and organize their medication plans using a med-action plan. They are also responsible for a presentation on the topic of their choice. Quizzes are used as discussion tools and not for grading.

***Byron Jones, Target Pharmacy:*** As the District Manager, Dr. Jones ensures that all of his pharmacists are being developed as leaders. Do they manage execution well? Do they develop strong relationships and communicate effectively? He makes sure that the students are matched with well-qualified pharmacist preceptors. Another focus is on communication with the patient and eliminating jargon so the layperson will understand the message. A third emphasis is helping each pharmacist and student understand the true goal of a community pharmacist: Being the patient’s advocate.

***Lisa James, UCSD Hillcrest Outpatient Pharmacy:*** On the first day, Dr. James works to find out each student’s previous experience and what they want to get out of the rotation. Using this information, she can build the rotation to fit their needs. Communication is a major focus. To help the students eliminate jargon from their language when communicating with patients, they are given a list of jargon terms & then must write down next to them alternate terms that a layperson would understand. In addition, students are given handouts with different OTC categories as headings which they complete & then discuss with her. Law and legal aspects are reviewed as well. Also, she assigns students to be “pharmacist problem-solvers for the day”, which means when patient issues and questions arise throughout the day, the student is responsible for resolving them.