

Joe Pinto Resident Leadership Essay Award

Congratulations to **Anna Danielle Kamuda, Pharm.D.**, PGY-1 Pharmacy Resident at NYHHS- Brooklyn VA. The topic this year was : "What is the value for Pharmacists to have formal training in business and leadership?"

In a world which is constantly progressing- in technology, education, politics, and of course, in healthcare- strong leadership is a determinant for success. State-of-the-art technology has allowed for automations and software to be integrated into daily pharmacy practice. Advancements in education have revolutionized learning by bringing hands-on simulation training into classrooms and expanding networks so students can experience a vast range of pharmacy practice experiences to apply the wide breadth of knowledge they have learned. Pharmacists, however slowly in New York state, have been gaining support from politicians to pass laws allowing for a well-deserved expansion of practice. Recent developments with Covid-19 and vaccine clinics have highlighted the importance of pharmacists in today's healthcare setting, one which has progressed immensely in recent years to be able to offer novel and innovative treatments which pharmacists diligently keep up with. Behind each of these betterments there is a team of pharmacy leaders researching, planning, and orchestrating to the best of their abilities.

The above-mentioned innovations in education, technology and healthcare have given pharmacists the power to participate in the optimization of patient care and safety. However, "with great power comes great responsibility." Technology, when utilized with patience and care, can work wonders in a pharmacy. Processes become safer and more efficient, sometimes eliminating manual labor for pharmacists and technicians altogether. With this luxury however, comes the need for a diligent leader trained to recognize and resolve issues of medication safety. Automations which automatically fill prescriptions or compound IVs and TPNs need to be properly stocked with drugs and solutions. Procedures for education and accountability need to be put in place by proactive leaders who can anticipate errors that may arise, for example, via alert fatigue or override functions which bypass safety features such as barcode scanning. Naturally, novel, practice-changing technologies are expensive. Pharmacy leaders, whether the owner of an independent practice or the chief of pharmacy within a health-system, need the business prowess to assess the practicality of such hefty expenses and possibly justify them to other stakeholders with purchasing power. This level of financial expertise and bigger-picture project management is beyond the curriculum of the average pharmacy program, and is best supported by a PGY-2 pharmacy residency in administration, or an additional degree, such as an MBA or MHA. While some leaders in pharmacy may rise in rank without additional training, instead learning on the job from the leaders before them, tailored programs like the ones mentioned allow pharmacists to explore various styles of leadership and techniques to manage operations, personnel, and finances. Such programs arm pharmacy leaders with a

wide range of skills and tools to adapt to their unique pharmacies and health-systems, while also developing critical-thinking skills and gaining practice interacting with leaders across healthcare and other professions. Such training allows pharmacist leaders to embrace innovative technologies and react to the changes they bring to pharmacy practice, including decreased need for pharmacists and technicians in manual processes like prescription filling and compounding. A trained leader, whose passions have been enhanced by specific skill sets, will be able to envision new roles for persons with jobs made obsolete by technology and use such opportunities to redistribute resources in a way that promotes pharmacy practice. A hospital pharmacist no longer needed in IV room processes, for example, could become a pharmacist available to interact directly with patients for medication reconciliation or discharge counseling, or a pharmacist available to work on an interdisciplinary team, rounding or being stationed in a unit. These visionary leaders, by pushing their team members to fulfill more interactive roles like these, ultimately boost pharmacist visibility and credibility to patients and other healthcare professionals alike.

The formal training of pharmacists in leadership and business allows these professionals to look beyond their clinical scope of knowledge and both visualize and justify, with evidence, novel pharmacist roles which enhance the provision of holistic patient care. This can be seen in recent years with the creation of more ambulatory and transitional of care pharmacist positions. In addition to caring closely for vulnerable patient populations, these residency-trained pharmacists are often doing research and gathering data to prove their added benefit or profitability to an organization. Pharmacist leaders with formal training in operations management, strategy, and data analysis may also be better equipped to handle decreased resources and increased workloads, expectations, and stress in emergency or pandemic situations, as demonstrated in this difficult year. The emphasis of formal leadership training programs on teamwork and interdisciplinary relationships can further benefit pharmacy leaders by encouraging open communication and task delegation in order to avoid burnout and fatigue.

Pharmacy leaders in academia have a unique opportunity to influence future pharmacists. Those with formal leadership or business training have additional insight and connections to share with students and further shape pharmacy programs with. As a result, students can benefit from opportunities like interprofessional learning experiences or mentorship programs. Pharmacists who have gone through formal leadership training are able to implement techniques and draw on experience to effectively teach upcoming pharmacy leaders how to pursue their passions and navigate an evolving healthcare setting. These are the same pharmacists who also have the drive, communication skills, and confidence to talk about pharmacy and its future potential to stakeholders outside of our practice. Well-equipped leaders like these are essential to advocate for our profession and help organize the efforts of other pharmacists, technicians, and students who have the passion but lack the tools needed to do so.

As healthcare and technology continue to advance, opportunities for pharmacists will continue to evolve as well. Visionary leaders who can advocate for and strategize the incorporation of new pharmacist roles into the healthcare setting will ensure that our profession continues to thrive and contribute to the provision of comprehensive, compassionate patient care.