Welcome back!

We’re already beginning the spring semester, and I hope this newsletter finds you ready to play an active role in your development as a pharmacy student! There is so much more to our curriculum than our courses; and it is my goal as president of our Rutgers Academy of Managed Care (AMCP) chapter to develop opportunities that will enhance your professional growth.

This year, AMCP is trying to refocus on helping students understand “managed care”. While managed care pharmacists do play roles in all areas of the pharmaceutical world, our broad scope can make it difficult to understand exactly what managed care is about. That is why the AMCP E-Board is designing events to shed light on how managed care uses medication management principles to improve patient health. We hope to provide events all pharmacy students (from PP1s to P4s) can benefit from, so don’t think it’s too early or too late to get involved!

During this exciting time of change and growth for AMCP, there are plenty of chances to make your mark. Contact the Rutgers AMCP E-Board at RutgersAMCP@gmail.com; we are more than happy to answer your questions or give you pointers on how to stay involved. Personally, I am a big fan of advising lunch meetings, so if you ever want to meet up just send an email!

At your service,
Alison Hernandez
Inside Look: The Day of a Clinical Pharmacist

by Heather Fernandez, Pharm.D.

I don’t work in a hospital, I sit at a desk, there are no patients in my building, and I am a Clinical Pharmacist. For some readers, the offices of Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey (BCBSNJ) and a position as a Clinical Pharmacist may not seem to fit together. However, The American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) defines clinical pharmacists as working directly with doctors, other health professionals, and patients “to ensure that the medications prescribed for patients contribute to the best possible health outcomes.”

At my current position as a Clinical Pharmacist at Horizon BCBSNJ, I am uniquely positioned to interact with patients through the in-house Medication Therapy Management (MTM) Program. Every day, I speak with several patients about the medications (prescription and non-prescription) that they are taking; how to better manage chronic diseases; and what to talk to their doctor about. I also speak with prescribers and pharmacies, to alert them of potential medication-related problems, suggest formulary alternatives, and to seek resolutions where appropriate. I work with Horizon case managers to ensure that the health management plans that I had discussed with patients and their prescribers are followed through and followed up with. I am part of a healthcare team whose players change throughout the day.

To give you a broader idea of what a Clinical Pharmacist in Managed Care can do, I completed my residency at Horizon BCBSNJ and was exposed to several aspects of Managed Care Pharmacy. I worked with other Clinical Pharmacists and Medical Directors to update and create medical policies which govern medically necessary uses of medications for coverage based on substantial clinical evidence. For the Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) Committee, we evaluated and presented new drug products and accompanying clinical trials. My fellow co-residents and I were also very fortunate to be able to help improve awareness of the importance of and disparities in health literacy within our organization and throughout the state.

As a graduating student, I was working in retail, long-term acute care, and medical communications. I wanted a new and unique pharmacy experience, but I knew that I didn’t want to sacrifice patient interactions. At the core of my job as a Clinical Pharmacist, I try to enhance the health experience for our members and make sure that they understand all of the information provided to them. I also hope to serve as a useful partner to prescribers in addressing patients’ most important and urgent health concerns and needs.

Diabetes Training by David Fett, Patient Care Coordinator

The patient care committee held a diabetes training on October 15th in the Pharmacy building in preparation for the ADA and JDRF walks in late October and a health fair in November. This event was held in collaboration with APhA, SNPhA, and NCPA. Jalpa Patel from Lilly started off the event by teaching diabetes fundamentals. Next Sophie Weikert from Roche walked the students through the testing process and students were allowed to practice on their own with the 30 monitors that Ms. Weikert brought with her.
Saturday, September 28 was an exciting day for the Health Care Literacy Committee of AMCP Rutgers Chapter as we successfully participated in our first event of the year at Holy Name Medical Center. This year, the HCL committee is partaking in the pilot program that Hannah Kim (last year’s AMCP president) began over the summer to educate the minorities on the Health Care Exchange and the Affordable Care Acts in general. AMCP at Rutgers is partnering with Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey to identify venues at which we can go out to educate minorities who may not be aware of the recent changes in health care.

Our first project was the Annual Korean Health Festival held at Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, New Jersey. This health fair annually attracts about 1500 mostly uninsured Korean Americans, and provides free examinations, blood tests, surgery consultation, vaccinations, and more. Nine EMSOP students who are fluent in Korean, along with Mylene Colom, Horizon’s sales manager, went to this health fair and reached out to hundreds of these patients. We gave out informational pamphlets that were translated in Korean as well as giveaways provided by Horizon.

This outreach project could not be more successful! We reached about 400 to 500 people, many of whom have only heard of the changes in health care policy, and wanted to learn more. Mylene also helped the students to use Horizon’s Tax Credit Finder online to help get an estimate of how much they would be paying per month for their insurance. Student volunteers also had a great time, actively reaching out to everyone that came near the table and even going after those that were waiting in line on the other side of the conference hall.

Although the purpose of this outreach event was to educate the minorities, I feel that we the student volunteers also learned a great deal. We saw the trials and difficulties of those that are uninsured firsthand. We also experienced that, as educated professional students, we have the privilege to educate and help those in need. HCL committee of AMCP cannot wait to participate in more events to educate and give back to the community!

### Introduction to Managed Care Programs

On December 5th, 2013, AMCP held its first ever Pre-Professional Series event called Introduction to Managed Care Programs. The event introduced basic managed care concepts such as prior authorization, step therapy, and drug utilization review. This event was designed so that even younger pre-professional students with minimal pharmacy knowledge and experience could attend and learn something. Coincidentally, students competing in the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Competition offered by AMCP could also benefit from understanding these basic managed care concepts and attended as well.

This is the first year that AMCP started a Pre-Professional Liaison Program in order to develop future leaders and nurture pre-professional interest in managed care. There are 4 pre-professional students in this program, 2 in pre-professional year 1 (Brianna Devitt and Olivia Qiu) and 2 in pre-professional year 2 (Jenny Shan and Mrunali Amin). Besides one pre-professional liaison who had class the night of the event, all three of the other liaisons researched a managed care topic and created PowerPoint slides for the presentation. During the event, they each presented their section and taught students about basic managed care concepts.

After the presentation, there was a game for which colorful posters were given as prizes. This was only the first of multiple Pre-Professional Series events so look forward for more events next semester! There will likely be a round table of residents/fellows as well as professionals in the managed care field for people to understand career prospects in managed care.

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This past semester was my first as a college and pre-pharmacy student. After I got comfortable with my schedule and routine, I decided that I wanted to be involved with a pharmacy organization early on in my college years. My first semester classes were introductory and not very specific to the pharmacy field—I hoped that joining a pharmacy group would give me experience and information that I would otherwise not be exposed to until later on in pharmacy school. For this reason, I chose to attend the Rutgers Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy chapter’s first meeting of the year. The members there were welcoming and made me feel that it wasn’t too early to get started.

Once I became an AMCP member I participated in the Patient Care diabetes training and volunteered to help at a few walks for diabetes. These walks were my first experience talking with people about health concerns as a student in the pharmacy program. At a walk for diabetes on Cook Campus, a custodian working on campus approached our table. He told us that he thought his daughter might be pre-diabetic, and we were able to share some knowledge and guides with him. Moments like this helped me recognize what effect spreading therapeutic information has. AMCP has been a great introduction to patient care. Because this year AMCP began to expand its focus to pre-professional student outreach, I also was able to serve as a PP1 Liaison through the Pre-Professional Liaison program. As part of this program, AMCP President Alison Hernandez and upcoming President Jennifer Liu have mentored us through the process of organizing an event. I contributed to planning and presenting at the AMCP “Introduction to Managed Care” presentation this past December.

I have enjoyed my early involvement in AMCP so far. Due to my participation in patient care activities I have begun to recognize the connections between what I will be learning in the future and its applications in the real world. The PP Liaison Program makes me appreciate the behind-the-scenes work involved with planning a successful pharmacy organization event. I plan on continuing my involvement with AMCP this semester, and look forward to what I will learn.

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P&T Local Competition Results by Dr. Saira Jan, AMCP Advisor

This competition gives you a great opportunity to gain experience practicing clinical literature evaluation, develop writing skills and giving a formal presentation. Above all, the participation from different professional years enhances team learning and develops the thinking process and application of knowledge required for formulary management.

This year it was especially commendable as the drug selected for competition (EYLEA®) was not a standard oral drug but a Medical specialty drug for macular degeneration. Understanding pharmacy and medical benefit, specialty management and complex pathology was challenging and required lot of work. All of you put lot of effort in this project and I am very proud of you.

This year’s winning team: Corey Hoffner, Curtis Li, Vishal Patel, and Roman Steiner.

Inside Look: Getting Involved with AMCP in your pre-professional years... by Brianna Devitt, AMCP Member

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