

# Community Pharmacists and Colleges of Pharmacy: The Ohio Partnership

Marc A. Sweeney, Vincent F. Mauro, Gerald L. Cable, Barbara M. Rudnicki, Andrea L. Wall, Christine C. Murphy, Joseph A. Makarich, and Abir A. Kahaleh

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## ABSTRACT

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**Objective:** To develop pharmacist practice standards, pharmacy preceptor standards, and objectives for students completing advanced practice community pharmacy rotations.

**Setting:** Ohio.

**Practice Description:** Pharmacy schools and community pharmacies that serve as advanced practice rotation sites.

**Practice Innovation:** Developed standards for preceptors and objectives for student experiences.

**Interventions:** Focus groups that included both community pharmacists and pharmacy faculty collaborated on defining key standards for advanced community pharmacy rotations.

**Main Outcome Measure:** Not applicable.

**Results:** Three main documents were produced in this initiative, and these are provided as appendices to this article. Professional and patient care guidelines for preceptors define minimum standards for these role models. Expectations of pharmacists as preceptors provide insights for managing this student-teacher relationship, which is fundamentally different from the more common employer-employee and coworker relationships found in pharmacies of all types. Objectives for student experiences during advanced practice community pharmacy rotations present core expectations in clinical, dispensing, patient education, wellness, and drug information areas.

**Conclusion:** Through this collaboration, Ohio colleges of pharmacy developed a partnership with practitioners in community settings that should enhance the Ohio experiential educational program for student pharmacists. Use of the established guidelines will help educators and practitioners achieve their shared vision for advanced practice community pharmacy rotations and promote high-quality patient care.

**Keywords:** Advanced practice rotations, education, community pharmacy, preceptors, collaboration, experiential training.

*J Am Pharm Assoc.* 2005;45:82-87.

Received October 17, 2003, and in revised form February 17, 2004. Accepted for publication February 26, 2004.

Marc A. Sweeney, PharmD, is Director, Experiential Programs and Associate Professor, College of Pharmacy, Ohio Northern University, Ada. Vincent F. Mauro, PharmD, is Associate Professor, College of Pharmacy, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio. Gerald L. Cable, BPharm, is Director, Professional Experience Programs and Clinical Assistant Professor, College of Pharmacy, The Ohio State University, Columbus. Barbara Rudnicki, BPharm, MS, is Director, Experiential Programs, College of Pharmacy, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio. Andrea L. Wall, BPharm, is Director, Professional Experiential Programs and Assistant Professor, College of Pharmacy, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio. Christine C. Murphy, BPharm, is Coordinator of Intermediate Practice Experience, College of Pharmacy, The Ohio State University, Columbus. Joseph A. Makarich, BPharm, is Pharmacist, Target Pharmacy, and Coordinator, Introductory Practice Experience, College of Pharmacy, The Ohio State University, Columbus. Abir A. Kahaleh, MPH, PhD, is Assistant Director, Experiential Education, and Assistant Professor, College of Pharmacy, Ohio Northern University, Ada.

Correspondence: Marc A. Sweeney, PharmD, College of Pharmacy, Ohio Northern University, 525 South Main Street, Ada, OH 45810. Fax: 419-772-2720. E-mail: m-sweeney@onu.edu

Disclosure: The authors declare no conflicts of interest or financial interests in any product or service mentioned in this article, including grants, employment, gifts, stock holdings, or honoraria.

Acknowledgments: To the Ohio Pharmacists Association Board of Trustees for its support of this project.

Colleges of pharmacy face many challenges in providing quality experiential training. The increased number of doctor of pharmacy students, rising costs of clinical rotations, more innovative pharmacy practices, and the need to meet changing accreditation standards make maintaining quality experiential training more difficult than ever.

Traditional methods of education use theories of learning to enable students to acquire knowledge, while experiential training focuses on applying the facts, information, and concepts gained in didactic coursework. These rotations do not emphasize the need to gain knowledge of abstract theories, but rather use an integrative approach to learning that includes experience and interactions between the student and preceptor in health care settings.<sup>1-4</sup>

Consequently, ideas and concepts are not fixed but are continuously shaped and reshaped based on experience. The process of experiential training links knowledge learned in pharmacy schools to decision making across real-life situations. Therefore, it is much broader than the traditional classroom learning process. It also involves developing an array of skills such as communications, problem solving, critical thinking, and professional competence.<sup>2,5-8</sup>

Preceptors must emphasize to the student the importance of connecting information, critical thinking, and action. This approach enables the students to make patient care-related decisions.<sup>9-10</sup> The overall goal of experiential training is for students to become competent entry-level pharmacy practitioners who are motivated to help others by continuously monitoring patients' therapies to ensure the effective and safe use of medications. To accomplish this goal and build upon previous efforts documented in the literature, the experiential directors from the four Ohio Colleges of Pharmacy collaborated on a project to define key standards for advanced community pharmacy rotations.

## AT A GLANCE

**Synopsis:** Experiential program directors from the four Ohio colleges of pharmacy collaborated in the development of preceptor standards and student objectives for advanced practice rotations in community pharmacies. Community pharmacy preceptors and state pharmacy professional organizations also participated in the process. The resulting standards and objectives are reproduced in this article.

**Analysis:** *Current pharmacy school curricula emphasize clinical management skills, which are largely acquired through experiential training. By developing standards and objectives for advanced practice rotations with the involvement of pharmacy practitioners and professional organizations, the Ohio colleges' initiative resulted in shared vision that will strengthen experiential education and enhance the quality of pharmacy education in Ohio.*

## Practice/Education Innovation and Intervention

A focus group made up of five independent community pharmacists and four college faculty members was established to connect academic objectives with current and developing community practice realities. The pharmacists invited to participate were chosen because at the time of the focus-group meeting (mid-1990s), they were already providing advanced practice rotations. The meeting, held in Columbus, Ohio, included discussions about the most important qualities of pharmacists, preceptors, and community pharmacy training sites. The pharmacists were asked to identify key elements of an advanced practice community pharmacy rotation and the important qualities of preceptors and pharmacists necessary to being effective role models. A summary of qualities was recorded and distributed to the experiential program representatives from the colleges of pharmacy at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio Northern University, The Ohio State University, and the University of Toledo. The information was analyzed by program directors and compared with the qualities described in the current literature.<sup>11-14</sup> The focus group results demonstrated a more practice-focused approach to providing student rotations than what exists in the current literature.

Directors from each experiential program collaborated to develop a list of pharmacist practice standards, pharmacy preceptor standards, and objectives for student experiences. This draft list of standards was peer reviewed by 20 advanced practice community pharmacy preceptors in Ohio, including representatives from independent pharmacies, chain pharmacies, and ambulatory care clinics. Each program director chose five preceptors affiliated with their experiential program. Based on feedback from the initial review, a second draft was developed and was distributed to the Ohio Pharmacists Association Board of Trustees for review and comment. The Board of Trustees included representatives from chain and independent pharmacies, industry, long-term care, academia, hospital, and management. The Board of Trustees also included student members from all four colleges of pharmacy. The final document was approved by all four program directors from the Ohio colleges of pharmacy and the Ohio Pharmacists Association Board of Trustees. The standards were presented at a preceptor training program at the Ohio Pharmacists Association and the Ohio Society of Health-System Pharmacists Midyear Meeting. Participants in this program were provided copies of the standards and through interactive workshops, developed methods for implementation and application of the standards.

## Results

Three documents were produced by the directors from the Ohio colleges of pharmacy experiential programs. The first document (Appendix 1) identifies professional and patient care guidelines for

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