



# Dream job merges my career, personal passions

By Mike Pavlovich, PharmD

What can I say? I have a dream job and I love it. Among other things, I serve elite athletes across the country. Baseball, basketball, football, hockey, you name it. I work with professionals, collegians, and amateurs, as well as weekend warriors and aspiring athletes-to-be. I expect to be present for the 2008 Olympiad in Beijing as a member of the United States Olympic Medical Team and have served the team for the last three Olympic Games. I have addressed organizations and medical personnel about the proper storage and handling of medications, regulatory considerations, and various health issues from Florida to Hawaii. I am regularly consulted for my evaluation of dietary supplements and foreign medicines. I am responsible for selecting the medications used during international competitions and ensuring they do not conflict with accepted standards.

Without question, this is a position for which there is no easy recipe for success.

## A one-of-a-kind position

My career began in a small farming community in central California in 1989 after graduating from the University of the Pacific School of Pharmacy. I was a pharmacy manager and part-time consultant for a skilled-nursing facility in a community pharmacy that specialized in long-term care. I worked for a clinician with more patience and tact than most humans possess. I learned the art of dealing with challenging patients and demanding physicians and how to defend my clinical

decision-making skills. Aside from the human and clinical aspects of my job, I was able to sharpen my skills for the pharmacoeconomic factors as well. Between 1994 and 2000, I had several other opportunities to further these skills, including a potential ownership of a community pharmacy, a position in software sales and development, and a return to long-term care. Then I found a practice setting that merged my career choice with my passion.

Throughout my life, I have been a participant and fan of many different sports, and my passion for sports is perhaps as strong as that for almost all things pharmacy in nature. When the opportunity to integrate both of these passions arose in 2000, I jumped at the chance. Robert Nickell and I had been friends for close to 10 years before I actually set foot in his pharmacy, HNP Pharmaceuticals. The pharmacy's goal is to provide patients and licensed health care practitioners with fast, easy access to customized compounded medications, independent testing to ensure the highest quality, a vast library of literature, and easy ordering and online prescription refills. Robert has given me the freedom to pursue a one-of-a-kind position as his pharmacist-in-charge at HNP. As far as I know, nothing else even comes close. Aside from being an ideal boss, he is also a great friend. We share many ideals about the way we practice pharmacy and we have both served as president of the California Pharmacists Association. Having such an ally that will not only support you, but promote your talents to others as well, is invaluable.

Our specialty is compounding, which we have integrated into mainstream pharmacy practice and created a unique delivery system for our athletic programs. Physical therapy treatments are part of our compounding services—we compound topical anti-inflammatory gels that can include an anesthetic agent or muscle relaxants, speed gels, iontophoresis solutions, phonophoresis gels, anesthetic sprays and gels, and antifungals for athlete's foot and jock itch.

## Indulge your curiosity

The best advice I can offer about preparation for a position like the one in which I am currently employed is to research your field of interest as thoroughly as possible. Indulge your curiosity and make a plan for success, surround yourself with people who can enhance your skills, and actively learn from your colleagues. Always try to take a creative approach to problem-solving and conflict resolution.

I believe the key to much of my success to date has been choosing to work with good role models and experts in their respective field. Having good support staff is critical. Develop the attitude of taking an occasional and calculated risk and offer services that no one else provides. Distinguish yourself from all competitors and relentlessly promote your service to your target audience. Most of all, pursue something that you will love to do for a very long time.

We have routinely provided clerkship rotations to interested students from several universities across the country, so please see what we are all about by visiting [www.hnp-pharmaceuticals.com](http://www.hnp-pharmaceuticals.com).



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