



PART II

Guidelines for the Local Competition

A. Planning Your Competition

Planning for the local competition should begin as early in the semester as possible. A director should be designated and committees or individuals should be appointed to oversee particular aspects of the competition. Promotion and publicity are important, since this is an activity with which the students may be unfamiliar. The competition should be scheduled at a time when there are a limited number of other activities. Two weeks after mid-terms is usually a good time. The sign-up period should last two weeks, although most students will wait until the last minute to sign up.

B. Organization

APhA-ASP chapters are responsible for organizing and conducting the competition at the local level. This is a competitive activity, so it is important that it be conducted fairly, with an equal opportunity for participants to compete and win. Changes in this handbook's procedures should be made only after assuring that the content of the program remains the same.

For there to be acceptance of the competition by the students as a whole, it is important that the competition be understood by the students, that it be perceived as an enjoyable and worthwhile experience, and that it have the appearance of being well-run. Effective organization can assure that these objectives are met.

The chapter advisor at each college of pharmacy will receive copies of the patient counseling competition handbook. This handbook is updated annually.

Each APhA-ASP chapter advisor will also receive a video of the previous year's National Competition finalists in order to promote participation in the local competition, and to use it as a teaching tool.

One person should be designated as the director of the Patient Counseling Competition each year. This person may be a

student volunteer, the APhA-ASP chapter advisor, or another faculty member. The director of the competition organizes and coordinates the competition and handles communications with APhA-ASP.

An initial organizational meeting should be held by the APhA-ASP chapter and other interested parties as early as possible in the school year. Planning should be well under way by three months prior to the deadline to schedule the appointment for the National Competition with the APhA-ASP National Office.

Timing of the competition will depend on other campus activities. The best time is following mid-semester exams during the first semester. The sign-up period would begin immediately following mid-semester exams and would last for two weeks. The timeline will be helpful in determining when to schedule the competition.

C. Structure

A program director should be designated as early as possible and volunteers for specific functions should be recruited. The director's job is both challenging and rewarding—the director is the leader and organizer. The director must know what resources are available, both in personnel and finance, in order to delegate tasks appropriately.

Three committees should be established and committee chairs selected.

The Finance Committee should obtain funding for the local competition and funds to help defray the expenses of sending the local winner to the National Competition. Chapters must locate financial resources for local prizes and travel costs. Optimally, \$1,000 is the recommended total for prizes and any additional funds should be allocated for travel assistance to the APhA Annual Meeting. If internal resources are inadequate to handle the expenses of the competition, a community pharmacy, chain pharmacy or a



PART II Guidelines for the Local Competition

state or local pharmacy association may be able to help. When all else fails, bake sales and car washes are good sources of revenue.

The Publicity Committee needs to begin work early. There will be three periods of time when this committee will be most needed: early in the semester, during the sign-up period, and immediately prior to the awards program.

The Program Committee has the most time-consuming job and will require the most manpower. This committee must organize and conduct the first and second rounds, including sign-up, preparation of scenarios, counseling sessions, and judging. The program committee will organize and run the awards program, which is a great opportunity to develop student interest and create anticipation for the next year's competition. There is a short period of time to accomplish a large number of objectives, so it is crucial that the program committee plan far in advance.

The director coordinates the activities of the individual committees through the committee chairs. Good communication between the committee chairs and the competition director is essential to keep things running as smoothly as possible. The committees should meet on a regular basis, at least once every week or two, to report any problems and to assess their progress.

The director also serves as a trouble shooter for the competition, so the ability to predict problem areas is an invaluable asset. Just as the director serves as a motivator and coordinator for the entire local competition, the individual committee chair's role in the success of the competition cannot be overemphasized. The committee chair must maintain frequent communication with committee members. Again, it is stressed that regular committee meetings are a proven means for maintaining good communication lines.

D. Eligibility

Students become eligible in their first professional year and remain so until obtaining their first degree in pharmacy. Post-Baccalaureate Pharm.D. students are ineligible for the competition. Eligible students who are on clerkships may participate. December graduates may participate, even though they will have graduated prior to the National Competition. The previous year's National Winner is not eligible to compete in the competition. **Students must be members of APhA-ASP to participate at the local and national levels of the competition.**

E. Promotion

Publicity should begin as early as possible. It would be best to familiarize eligible students with the concept of the competition during the early part of the fall semester.

Although the primary target of promotional efforts should be students who are eligible to compete, students who are not yet eligible should also be informed of the nature of the competition and what they have to look forward to in the future.

Several large posters and flyers publicizing the competition will be distributed to each school by APhA. These materials can be distributed in class and hung on bulletin boards around the school. Place advertisements in student newspapers. It is virtually impossible to over promote the program.

Promotion of the contest to students should be done by the students themselves. It is important that this program be clearly identified as a student activity conducted by APhA and not be perceived as a faculty activity. Find a time when all members of the eligible classes can view the video of the previous year's national winner, such as an APhA-ASP chapter meeting or a Dean's hour. This video will be provided with the chapter advisor's copy of the Patient Counseling Competition Handbook.



PART II Guidelines for the Local Competition

Also, have students who have participated in the competition before tell how the experience may have helped them.

The Patient Counseling Competition should be presented to the students as an opportunity for personal growth and a chance to become recognized as skillful communicators. The cash prizes should be emphasized, but the trip to the APhA Annual Meeting for the winner will probably be the most impressive material reward. Optimally, the recommended cash prizes are \$250 for the winner, \$125 for the first runner-up, \$75 for the second runner-up, and \$50 for the third runner-up. It should be stressed at all times that the competition is a non-threatening activity. No one will grill the students or attempt to embarrass them.

The competition should be promoted to pharmacy faculty as well as students. A representative of the APhA-ASP chapter should attempt to address a faculty meeting, give a brief presentation including the video, and then respond to questions. Faculty can be very influential in encouraging students to participate and providing them with information about the competition. Also inform them that APhA will provide each of the top 10 finalists with a selection of book prizes.

F. Preparing for the Preliminary Round

Sign-up lists for the preliminary round should be posted in a readily accessible area two weeks prior to the competition. Sign-ups will probably not occur in great numbers at the beginning of the two-week period. Announcements to appropriate classes should be made during the sign-up period. The director should post the sign-up list with times for reference and ask the students to arrive 10 minutes early, dressed professionally.

A preliminary round with more than 50 participants may be difficult to evaluate with consistency, and will require even greater organizational skills by the committee. If 15 or fewer sign-up, it may be possible to conduct the competition without a preliminary round.

Scenarios for the first round should be developed by a faculty member who is familiar with actual practice situations. The sce-

narios should be simple and involve information that needs to be conveyed to the patient by the pharmacist. There should not be any problems that require consultation with the prescriber. Potential problems, such as drug-drug or drug-food interactions should be of a minor nature that can be resolved by the pharmacist in consultation with the patient.

A mock pharmacy should be set up either at the school's model pharmacy or in a classroom. All that is necessary are a counter and reference sources. The references can be books, electronic software, loose-leaf sources, rolodex systems, or handout leaflets. Students will not be allowed to bring their own materials to the competition. Audiovisual equipment should be arranged for in advance and should be checked prior to its use. It is advisable to use a videotape system that judges may use to view the participants from home. Alternatively, the chapter may wish to host a meeting for the judges in order to provide a controlled environment for judging to take place. Providing refreshments is a nice touch.

The Patient

Volunteers should be solicited to play the role of the patient. These volunteers could be faculty members, representatives of local or state pharmacy associations, New Practitioner Mentors, graduate students, or local practitioners.

Patients should be reactive but should not initiate discussions during the first round. The patient should appear receptive to the information being conveyed but otherwise should not interact with the participant unless a question is asked. If questions are asked, the patient should provide a reasonable answer. Patients should be familiar with the profile of the patient they are playing and they should know the appropriate response to questions such as "when do you usually eat dinner," "what is your occupation," etc. Patients should not, however, create a dilemma that is not apparent from the prescription and the patient profile.

Instructions for the patient in the preliminary round are provided. This handout should be copied and given to the patient in advance for preparation and reviewed with the patient just prior to conducting the preliminary round.



PART II Guidelines for the Local Competition

The Judges

Faculty, New Practitioner Mentors, or pharmacy graduate students who have a familiarity with pharmacy practice are good choices for judges in the preliminary round. Since the purpose of the preliminary round is only to screen participants for the finals, it is not crucial to devise a system that will accurately distinguish the precise rank of each participant. There should be a short period of time for judging between the preliminary round and the posting of the finalists' names. After the 10 finalists are announced, they will need sufficient time to sign up for the final round of the competition. Therefore, availability will play an important role in selecting the judges for the preliminary round.

G. Conducting the Preliminary Round

Students should arrive 10 minutes prior to their scheduled time. Fifteen minutes should be allowed for each participant. At the appointed time, each participant will be brought into the mock pharmacy and shown the prescription counter. A folder of patient profiles, a selection of references, and an empty prescription vial should be available. The person conducting the competition should read the rules to the participant. Rules for the preliminary round are provided and are suitable for copying for the participants. After reading the rules, the participants have an opportunity to ask questions regarding the procedures.

The person in charge should identify the participant on the video, note the video counter reading, hand the appropriate prescription to the participant, and indicate that the patient will arrive in five minutes. The participant then studies the prescription, the appropriate patient profile, and the reference sources. After five minutes, the person in charge turns on the videotape equipment, the patient enters the mock pharmacy and approaches the counter to request the filled prescription. The participant then counsels the patient for (up to) five minutes. To assure adequate counseling, the participant must choose which facts are the most important to convey

first. While five minutes is a short period of time, it accurately reflects the maximum amount of time likely to be available in the typical practice situation.

The participant is given a warning when there is only one minute remaining. This warning can be a hand signal or any appropriate sign to advise the participant that only one minute remains. After five minutes the videotape equipment should be turned off, whether or not the participant is finished. The participant is then told when and where the list of finalists will be posted and that it will be necessary to sign up for the final round.

It is probably best to use several different scenarios for the preliminary round. These can be numbered and the participants can select a number, or, the scenarios can be randomly selected by the person conducting the preliminary round. The scenarios should be sufficiently similar in difficulty so that there will not be a particular advantage to choosing one scenario over another.

The Judges

Judges should have available to them the following materials during judging: copies of all prescriptions and patient profiles, a copy of an appropriate drug information resource regarding each drug for which counseling is expected, a list of participants, the videotape counter reading at which each scenario begins, and the prescription each participant was given.

Judges should also be given sufficient copies of the evaluation form, a copy of the "Instructions for Judges— Preliminary Round," and the evaluation form criteria. The person in charge should answer any questions about procedures, but should avoid being judgmental about individual participants.

After the judging, the director of the competition should tabulate the scores and post a list of finalists in the same place where the original sign-up took place. The scores should not be posted.

The director of the competition should bear in mind that prizes from APhA will be given to each school's top 10 students. Therefore ties that would increase the number of finalists beyond 10 should be avoided.



PART II Guidelines for the Local Competition

H. Preparing for the Final Round

The sign-up sheet for the final round should be posted at the same location as the sign-up sheet for the preliminary round. A final round sign-up sheet is provided (see page 31). Announcements should be made in appropriate classes that finalists have been identified and that sign-ups for the final round should be completed by a specific time. Students on clerkship should be notified directly.

Scenarios for the final round should be more difficult than for the preliminary round. One option is to have a demonstration included as part of the scenario. The mock pharmacy should be prepared in the same fashion as for the preliminary round. All materials necessary for required demonstrations should be readily available. Audio-visual equipment is the same as the preliminary round.

The patient in the final round should be a person with some acting talent in order to be able to portray a specific problem or characteristic. The director of the program should meet with the patient to identify which personality traits the patient would feel comfortable portraying. Instructions for the final round patient are provided. The particular roles to be played by the patient should provide the participants with roughly the same level of difficulty.

I. Conducting the Final Round

The final round is much the same as the preliminary round. Rules for the final round are provided.

The person in charge enters the room and identifies the participant on the videotape, notes the VCR counter reading, hands the appropriate prescription to the participant, indicates he/she will return in five minutes, and then leaves the model pharmacy.

Participants are given five minutes to review reference materials. After this time, the patient enters the room, the recording equipment is activated, and the participant is allowed five minutes to counsel the patient. Remember the patient will be more difficult than the patient in the prelimi-

nary round. The patient may be distracting or stray from the subject. It is important for the participant to be sensitive to the patient's needs but to still convey the appropriate information in the five minute time interval. When one minute remains in the counseling session, a warning is given. After the scenario is concluded or when the five minute time limit is reached, the videotape system is shut off. The participant should be told when and where the awards program will be conducted and what to expect about the program. All participants should attend the program.

The Patient

The patient should play the role determined (e.g., angry, worried, distrustful, hearing impaired, etc.) so that the participant must work to overcome this communication obstacle, but not so that it is impossible to communicate. The specific method of playing the role will vary from one participant to another. It is difficult to maintain a consistent approach, but it is very important to avoid being overly difficult with good communicators and overly compliant with poor communicators. Perhaps the most significant potential pitfall of the entire competition is a patient whose role-playing prejudices the outcome.

When one minute remains in the counseling session, a warning is given. After the scenario is concluded or when the five minute time limit is reached, the videotape system is shut off. The participant should be told when and where the awards program will be conducted and what to expect at the program. All participants should attend the awards program.

The Judges

The best judges for the final round are practicing pharmacists who have a reputation for a patient-focused practice. Recruiting judges from outside the college adds credibility to the competition and it reduces the possibility of bias from internal judges who know the students. It is important to contact judges early to assure their availability. Some judges may need to view the



PART II Guidelines for the Local Competition

videotapes at night or at home using their own equipment, although providing a controlled environment for the judges is preferable.

The most important aspect of the judging in the final round is that there must be no ties. Using three judges and the evaluation form included on page 26 should facilitate adequate discrimination among the participants. Instructions for the final round judges are provided (see page 25). If a tie does occur within the top four finishers, some type of re-assessment should be performed by the judges. It is recommended that the judges remain anonymous—at least until after the competition.

J. The Awards Program

The best way to stimulate interest in the competition and to encourage participation in the next year's competition is to conduct an effective awards program. It is important to hold the awards program at a time when no other activities are scheduled and to limit the program to approximately 30 minutes.

The awards program should be publicized to students and faculty. A sample flyer for this purpose is provided (page 32). Since this type of program is patient-oriented, local and campus

media may be interested in covering it as a health-related or human interest story. Having students contact local television stations could bring about surprising results.

A good schedule for the awards program is as follows:

- (1) Welcome and explanation of the competition
- (2) Presentation of awards
- (3) Showing of the videotape of the first place winner
- (4) Brief presentation by a guest speaker

The director of the competition should conduct the awards program. Awards may be presented by the APhA-ASP chapter president, the Dean, or an outside person. If the competition has been funded by an outside source, it is suggested that a representative of that source be involved in the awards ceremony. The guest speaker may be one of the judges or another practicing pharmacist who can make a motivational presentation. A press release should be submitted to the local media following the awards program.

The chapter advisor will e-mail the top 10 finalists' contact information to APhA. APhA will then contact the individual finalists via e-mail with the instructions on how to order and receive their prizes. Remember, students must be APhA members to participate in the competition.