

# Don't be afraid to pave your own road

## *Association work offers different view of pharmacy practice*



**By Jeff Rochon, PharmD**

Call me adventurous. Call me curious. I do not like to settle for “pretty good” or “adequate.” It is my belief that if you are going to spend nearly two-thirds of your life in a profession, you better enjoy it and find it fulfilling. Do not wait for life to happen to

you. Roll up your sleeves and create your opportunities. Amazing jobs can sometimes fall into your lap, but more often than not, good things happen to people who are not afraid to work hard and take chances.

I graduated from the University of Washington (UW) School of Pharmacy in 1999. My experiences in school and while attending pharmacy events made one thing abundantly clear to me: The world of pharmacy is very small. From your first day in pharmacy school, you start to create a reputation that will follow you throughout your professional career. The people you meet, and the choices you make, can affect your career opportunities. Take advantage of each academic and professional development opportunity to improve your patient care skills and increase your health care relationships and resources.

### Positioning yourself

While in pharmacy school, I began to realize that I really enjoy patient interaction. Developing relationships with patients allows me to play an active role in their overall health care. Over time, my focus spread from treating patients with a diagnosed illness to helping them stay healthy through appropriate lifestyle decisions.

As graduation approached, I took a look at all my options. Was the “perfect job” out there? Should I take a pharmacy practice residency? It was then that I decided to pave my own road to professional fulfillment. I had been reading about Community Pharmacy Residency Programs (CPRP), and I was intrigued. However, at that time, there were no CPRP's in Washington. I approached Warren Narducci, PharmD, and John Oftebro and, with their help, created a community pharmacy practice residency at Kelley-Ross Pharmacy in Seattle. This challenge enabled me to develop pharmacy care programs, including a community-based hypertension education and management program

Part of my residency also included participation in the Polyclinic's Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee. Committee discussions regarding chronic disease state management programs led me to volunteer to develop an anticoagulation clinic in the cardiology division of the Polyclinic. It was through this experience that I learned a great deal about billing for patient care services and collaborative drug therapy agreement protocols

that grant pharmacists prescribing authority. I became well aware of the challenges and obstacles involved in demonstrating to physicians and health care administrators the pharmacist's value in medication management services.

### Fostering student development

Today, I am the director of pharmacy care services for the Washington State Pharmacy Association (WSPA). Along with WSPA CEO Rod Shafer—a member of the APhA Board of Trustees—I spend my days assisting pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians in the development and implementation of pharmacy care services. These include emergency contraception, immunization, and tobacco cessation programs. In addition, I aid pharmacists and pharmacy interns in setting up clinics for managing and screening patients for chronic disease such as hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, asthma, and hyperlipidemia. I also oversee the WSPA continued education (CE) programs. As chair of the association's CE Committee, I work to foster the clinical and professional growth of pharmacists, pharmacy students, and pharmacy technicians by providing quality CE.

A significant part of my duties involve fostering students' professional development. As a member of the clinical faculties at UW and the Washington State University College of Pharmacy, I am able to teach aspiring pharmacists how to contribute to the pharmacy profession and perform community health screenings. I serve as an advisor for the UW APhA-ASP chapter and the Unified Professional Pharmacy Organizations of Washington, and I am a clinical practicum preceptor to pharmacy students for two WSPA clerkships, the WSPA Legislative Practicum, and the WSPA Health Awareness and Prevention Screening Practicum.

Finally, an especially rewarding part of my job is my work on developing collaborative care alliances. Amazingly, a number of health care providers are unaware of the training and expertise of pharmacists.

I thoroughly enjoy my job, and, although I am not currently providing direct patient care, I am able to expand my influence by helping pharmacists provide patient care and to see the positive outcomes of my work as the profession of pharmacy progresses. Remember, when the road less traveled does not point in the direction you want, do not be afraid to pave your own road.

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