

Speaker of the House Update
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Mister Secretary, Mister Parliamentarian, APhA Staff, and Delegates, good afternoon. I appreciate the opportunity to bring you a few remarks today. As we have a fairly ambitious agenda today, I will be brief.

We had two items referred to the Board of Trustees in the 2023 House of Delegates, so I have an IOU to pay. Let's touch base on those items before we move along. The first was a statement which came from a New Business Item (NBI) titled Transgender and Nonbinary Health Care (Statement 2). This statement was related to the engagement of this population in research, and it was referred to the Board because as a House we couldn't quite land on what the intent was. The Board asked the group who introduced the NBI to consider re-crafting the statement, perhaps into two separate statements, to cover the prevailing interpretations brought forward in this House. The group communicated back and has opted not to introduce new statements at this time. The second item referred to the Board was a suite of statements, also introduced as a New Business Item, related to conscience clause and titled Protection of Patients, Pharmacists, and Pharmacies. The Board has opted, based on additional statements made during the recommendations, or "open mic", portion of the final House session, to convene an ethics task force to address this and other considerations of an ethical nature. This aligns with APhA's 2004, 1998 Pharmacist Conscience Clause policy which states that APhA shall appoint a council on an as needed basis to serve as a resource for the profession in addressing and understanding ethical issues. This is a great example of policy developed by this House of Delegates leading to action. You can look forward to this type of follow up on referred items in the Speaker report going forward.

Before we get into the business of the House which is, inevitably, future-focused, let's look momentarily in the rearview mirror to see how far we've come. In 2008, this House identified the need for more residency positions in a wide variety of practice settings. We passed policy saying that we need more, we need variety, and we need quality. This stretch of time was when I was starting pharmacy school and then looking into residencies myself. At that time I noticed there were numerous hospital or health-system pharmacy residency positions but only the merest suggestion, really, of other options in other practice settings. Since then the availability of residency positions has grown exponentially in both number and variety. Notably, APhA has long been taking lead in the community pharmacy residency space by partnering with American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) to accredit PGY1 community-based pharmacy residency programs (CPRPs because we adore an acronym). This weekend we are celebrating 40 years of these CPRPs. The work of the association, driven by the work of this House, has paved the way for more pharmacists to receive various types of post-graduate training which ultimately results in better patient care and outcomes.

Something that can be challenging for us is grappling with the time it can take to see the changes we want come to fruition. Just over 11 years ago APhA took the first step toward achieving provider status for pharmacists on the federal level; this, too, was pursuant to policy passed in this House in 2011. While the effort continues on the federal level, progress continues to be made, and significant strides are seen, in many states. The needle is moving. It can be easy to get a bit impatient or jaded when progress doesn't quite move at the speed we'd like, but it remains critical that we continue the work no matter how long or arduous the journey.

On the subject of arduous journeys, we have consistently heard from our members and the profession at large that workplace conditions are poor and deteriorating. Pharmacy personnel are struggling to care for patients in conditions that can, in many cases, be termed appalling. People don't feel heard. People are burned out. Some are suffering significant or permanent harm. This House just passed policy in 2023 addressing this topic, and the work is going full speed ahead. It can be tempting to avoid taking such strong stands on certain issues, and I must say I am proud that this House, and by extension this association, has stated in no uncertain terms that we deserve humane working conditions and that employers bear responsibility for bringing about change and doing right by their employees. It's never easy, but if we turn our backs on our principles we stop being human.

I want to close by expressing what an honor and joy it is to be serving this House as Speaker. I am grateful for this opportunity and for the support, not to mention patience, I receive from APhA Staff – Brian, Brittany, and Wendy – along the way. What I have always found beautiful about the work we do together each year in this House is the aspirational nature of it. We look at how things are and then envision how they could be... and then we write it down and make it our association's policy. What's even more remarkable is that it often works. It all starts with one idea... from one person. Remember that. One voice can be stronger than a thousand voices. Thank you.