

# Adventures of a New Practitioner

## *Addendum to APhA CEO Tom Menighan's 2015 Commencement Address*

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We're all about outcomes, right? Typically, you've focused on patient outcomes. But what about career outcomes? Clearly some fare better than others. How can you optimize YOUR outcomes in your career as you progress from new practitioner to seasoned pro? When I asked the leadership of our New Practitioner group, here are some of their insights:

- The level of responsibility you will be expected to bear by patients and other health care providers will surprise you.
- You'll likely be expected to lead, often by supervising someone older than yourself.
- You'll not be successful at everything you try. There is a safety net in school that is not as readily available in practice. Failures should be a great teacher.

In my case, for example, I got passed over for a big promotion in my first tour of duty at APhA many years ago because I didn't have an advanced degree. That led me to an MBA, which has made a huge difference in my career! Tom Peters, in "Thriving on Chaos," says "**Encourage rapid failure.**" **Don't be afraid to try something new, but move on quickly if it's not working.**

And here are some other suggestions from our New Practitioner leaders:

- **Learn to innovate!** It's a learned, not inherited skill. If you want to dig deeper, read the Innovator's DNA, by Clayton Christensen. You should not feel constrained by 4 walls of a hospital, institution or pharmacy. Opportunities may not be readily apparent, or even defined yet.
- **Residencies are great!** They are not the only pathway to marketability. Take advantage of many certificate training programs, become a Certified Diabetes Educator, or pursue BPS certification. All of these create value the market recognizes.
- **Don't let your career define you.** Engage in community service. Find your passion outside pharmacy to maintain work-life balance.
- **You were trained inter-professionally.** Be the change agent who eliminates silos through communication. Work within pharmacy, but actively nurture collaborative relationships. Today's practices are changing rapidly, and you will be the key to success.
- **Learn to negotiate and advocate for yourself.** If you don't tell us or your state associations about issues, things won't change.

None of this is likely to be news to you, but it may surprise you to know that answers are closer than you might imagine.

The **APhA New Practitioner Network**, found on [www.pharmacist.com](http://www.pharmacist.com) offers webinars, articles in the Transitions e-newsletter, and discussion on our Facebook page about issues you'll face, including supervisory training and how to lead colleagues who have more experience. This year's grads will be plugged into a network of experienced recent grads who were just in their shoes and now have the knowledge and experience to pass on. As a member of the NPN, you will immediately inherit a new squad of mentors ready to help guide you.

**Plan to participate at the APhA 2016 Annual Meeting** in Baltimore March 4-7. As a NP there, you will meet these fellow recent grads in person at numerous networking, leadership and social events. Our cutting-edge education will focus on practice issues, including supervisory training, and financial planning.

To help manage work-life balance in the face of new jobs, new families, and debt, articles in our **Transitions e-newsletter** will help. You will read their stories and hear your peers' voices on how they find time for their passions outside of pharmacy. Maintaining balance can have a huge impact on your ability to provide top notch patient care.

Here are some recent quotes and thoughts from pharmacists in our New Practitioner Network:

- *“We probably wouldn't be talking about Provider Status without APhA!”*
- *“Leadership opportunities are plentiful. Whatever your interest, the NPN has a place for you to make your mark. You can serve as a Mentor for a local APhA-ASP Chapter and pay it forward. You can write articles for Transitions and Student Pharmacist Magazine. You can serve as delegate to the APhA House of Delegates. You can serve on one of the four NP Standing Committees or the NP Advisory Committee. You can be active in our SIGs, or in our two academies. Currently, two new practitioners are on the ballot for election to the APhA Board of Trustees. Make sure you vote!”*
- *“APhA's Certificate Training Programs are great to distinguish yourself from others.”*
- *“Networking in the Special Interest Groups, or SIGS with NPs is an amazing way to connect with all members of APhA, who practice in all practice settings”*

Good Luck, and Well Wishes to each of you to making a difference in the communities you serve. APhA is here to help you be successful.