This guide will help your chapter plan, organize, and implement your APhA-ASP Operation Self-Care projects and events.

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Managing Editor
Crystal Atwell, PharmD
APhA Director, Student Development
Dear Patient Care Coordinator:

The American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) is excited to bring you the newest patient care program: Operation Self-Care, a national patient education campaign supported by Procter & Gamble. Over the last eight years, student pharmacists have been able to help more than 9 million heartburn sufferers Get Heartburn Smart and live healthier, happier, and more productive lives. With over 60 million Americans affected by the symptoms of heartburn more than twice each week, student pharmacists will again have the opportunity to assist their communities through patient education and outreach. Due to the success of your efforts and recommendations from leaders like you, we look forward to the expansion of the program.

As a participant in this year’s Operation Self-Care, your chapter is encouraged to continue your education initiatives and programs about heartburn. We also encourage you to make plans for expanding the program to other areas of self-care. The goal of the program is to educate patients in your community and encourage them to utilize their pharmacist as a health care provider and medication expert. Through involvement in this project, your chapter members will also have an opportunity to interact with patients and further develop their presentation and counseling skills. More information on the project will be provide during the APha2013 APhA Annual Meeting & Exposition, as well as 2013 APhA Summer Leadership Institute.

Your APhA-ASP National Executive Committee would like to provide you with the resources necessary to achieve success with this patient care project and improve the lives of heartburn sufferers in your community. The following planning guide and Get Heartburn Smart presentation have been developed to support your chapter as you coordinate events throughout the year.

At the conclusion of this guide you will also find a reporting form to document your chapter’s activities for submission to APhA. Recognition will be given to all chapters that participate in the Heartburn Awareness Challenge campaign. Those chapters with the most innovative and successful projects will also receive regional and national awards at the 2014 APhA Annual Meeting & Exposition in Orlando, FL. Reports must be submitted no later than July 15, 2013 to be considered for an award.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Procter & Gamble for their generosity and ongoing support of this program and for recognizing the value of student pharmacists in educating the public. I challenge every APhA-ASP Chapter to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity, collaborate with pharmacists and other health care professionals, and reach out to the community. Thank you in advance for your hard work and dedication to this important national project. I look forward to the success of Operation Self-Care campaign this year.

Sincerely,

David R. Steeb, Student Pharmacist  
2012-2013 APhA-ASP National President  
Eshelman School of Pharmacy University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
INTRODUCTION
From Heartburn Awareness Challenge to Operation Self-Care

APhA-ASP with the support of P&G launched the Heartburn Awareness Challenge in 2004 to address the need of the more than 60 million adults in the U.S. who experience heartburn or medicate heartburn symptoms once a month. The educational campaign promoted the role of the pharmacist in self-care and helped student pharmacist develop their communication and presentation skills, all while helping to make their communities heartburn smart.

In 2012 based on recommendations from student leaders, chapter advisors, and APhA-ASP Education Standing committee, the APhA-ASP National Executive Committee voted to extend the program’s focus to other self-care areas. The timeline for expanding the program:

- 2012 APhA Summer Leadership Institute – Transition of the Heartburn Awareness Challenge announced
- 2013 APhA Annual Meeting & Exposition – New resources and program goals reviewed during patient care workshop; Final Heartburn Awareness Challenge award recipients recognized
- 2013 APhA Summer Leadership Institute – Additional information provided for chapter leaders
- Fall 2013 – Updated planning guides available for patient care project coordinators

Goals for Operation Self-Care:

1. Educate the public on the safe and effective use of nonprescription medication and information on the related disease states/medical conditions, and if necessary, refer them to their primary care provider.
   - a. Potential Areas of Focus:
   - b. GI Wellness
   - c. Heartburn
   - d. Cough, Cold, Allergy
   - e. Pain
   - f. Additional focus topics could be added during future years of the program. Topics would be determined based on the recommendations of the APhA-ASP National Executive Committee and feedback from student pharmacists.

2. Provide education and information on prevention strategies (nutrition and lifestyle modification) for common medical conditions treated by nonprescription medication.
3. Promote the profession of pharmacy and the role of pharmacists in the prevention and management of self-care conditions.

4. Provide an opportunity for student pharmacists to enhance their communication, presentation, and patient counseling skills.

During the 2012 – 2013 cycle, chapters are encouraged to continue their heartburn education activities and begin plans for expanding their initiatives to other areas of self-care.

**Why screen and provide heartburn education?**

Heartburn, or acid indigestion, is one of the most common ailments in the United States. It is estimated that more than 60 million adults in the U.S. experience heartburn or medicate heartburn symptoms once a month, and an estimated 15 million adults experience heartburn on a daily basis. Since heartburn is so widespread, many people consider it a trivial condition. Some advertisements for heartburn remedies take a lighthearted approach to the malady, making a joke out of common complaints. Heartburn sufferers know that the discomfort is no laughing matter. Pain and discomfort caused by heartburn is very real and can severely limit daily activities, productivity, and quality of life.

The good news is that heartburn symptoms can be controlled and complications can generally be avoided with proper treatment and monitoring from a health care professional. Heartburn can be controlled -- to improve the quality of life and to avoid possible complications in the long-run.

**Pharmacy’s role in preventing and treating heartburn**

Research shows that people look to pharmacists as trusted advisors. An annual Gallup survey consistently places pharmacists at the top of the “trust ladder” for consumers. As student pharmacists you have the knowledge, energy, and connections to your community to make a difference in the lives of heartburn sufferers, their family, and their friends. You are a valuable resource; you can help by identifying groups within your community that can benefit from the educational materials APhA has to offer on heartburn management. Potential groups that you may want to reach out to include women’s organizations, sports clubs, senior citizens, and student groups.

Help sufferers in your community “Get Heartburn Smart.” The Operation Self-Care Planning Guide, presentation, and patient education materials from Procter & Gamble give you everything you need to get started. Every time you provide education to your patients, you are helping people in your community maintain a higher quality of life.
Facts about Heartburn

Incidence

- More than 60 million American adults and approximately 40 percent of all Americans (American Journal of Gastroenterology) experience heartburn at least once a month.
- 15 million American adults suffer from heartburn daily (American College of Gastroenterology).
- Symptoms of heartburn are more common in the elderly and women during pregnancy (American College of Gastroenterology).
- Heartburn is the most common symptom of a condition called gastresophageal reflux disease, or GERD. Approximately 21% of the U.S. population may suffer from GERD (International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders).

Financial Costs

- The American College of Gastroenterology reported that GERD symptoms cost the U.S. nearly $2 billion per week in lost productivity.
- Patients and insurance companies in the U.S. spent between $14 and $15 billion in 2003 on medications for heartburn and related symptoms (IMS, ACNielsen).
- The IFFGD estimates that the diagnosis and treatment of GERD and related esophageal disorders, of which heartburn is a common symptom, cost Americans $10 billion a year.
- Heartburn costs climb even higher when calculating lost days of work and impact on productivity.
- Quality of Life Impact: Heartburn associated with GERD can be debilitating and severely impact the quality of life of its sufferers.
- A study in the American Journal of Medicine indicates quality of life scores for patients with severe GERD-related heartburn are lower than patients with congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease and diabetes mellitus.
- Almost a quarter of frequent heartburn sufferers say the impact is severe or significant and 50% indicated that time spent with their friends and family is “less enjoyable” because of heartburn.

Cause

Heartburn is caused when stomach acid refluxes (flows upward) into the esophagus. This generally occurs when the lower esophageal sphincter (LES)—the natural valve that keeps stomach acid in the stomach and out of the esophagus—is not functioning properly.

When functioning normally, the LES operates like a door that allows food into the stomach but not out the same way. However, at times the LES relaxes and allows stomach juices to flow upward into the esophagus. This relaxation exposes the esophagus to the harsh acid from the stomach.
**Contributing Factors/Triggers**

Various lifestyle and dietary factors as well as certain medications can contribute to heartburn by:

- Increasing the relaxation of the LES, causing the valve to open
- Increasing the amount of acid produced in the stomach
- Making the esophagus more sensitive to harsh acid

The most common contributing factors include the following:

*Eating/Dietary Habits*
- Eating citrus fruits, chocolate, peppermint, spearmint, tomatoes or tomato-based products, garlic, raw onions, black pepper, vinegar and fatty or spicy foods
- Drinking coffee, citrus juices and caffeinated, carbonated or alcoholic beverages
- Eating large portions
- Eating before bedtime

*Certain Positions*
- Lying down, especially after eating
- Bending over

*Medical reasons*
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Pregnancy
- Hiatal hernia
- Medications

*Lifestyle habits*
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Certain types of exercise
- Stress or hectic lifestyle
- Wearing restrictive clothing

**Treatment Goals**

Until recently, the primary goals of treatment for heartburn and other symptoms of GERD were to **decrease** the amount of reflux and reduce the damage to the lining of the esophagus. With the development of new heartburn medications, **symptom elimination and prevention** is the common goal and is achievable for most patients with GERD or heartburn symptoms alone.
Treatment Options

A variety of lifestyle, behavioral, and dietary changes are the first line of defense. Sufferers need to identify their most common trigger substances and behaviors and subsequently try to avoid those behaviors or substances to reduce the risk of reflux.

In addition to these modifications, a wide range of non-prescription and prescription medications also can provide relief:

- **Antacids** neutralize some existing acid in the esophagus and stomach to provide short-term relief. These are often the first medications recommended to relieve heartburn symptoms.
- **H2 blockers**, or acid reducers, work by turning off one of the three main signals that activate acid pumps in the stomach. This partially reduces the release of some of the acid that the pump produces. The effect of H2 blockers generally lasts 10 hours and are considered short term.
- **Prokinetic agents** speed up the emptying of stomach contents and decrease reflux.
- **Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs)** work directly on active pumps to significantly inhibit acid production, allowing enough acid to be produced for normal digestion of food. PPIs can provide 24-hour treatment with one pill a day.

Whether taking prescription or over-the-counter medications, it is important that sufferers read the label or package insert thoroughly and follow their health care professional’s directions on taking medication. People who do not get complete relief with the treatments listed above should visit their health care professional for a more complete diagnostic evaluation.

Complications

Frequent and persistent bouts of heartburn can signal a more serious condition called gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD. GERD can be associated with esophagitis, an inflammation or irritation of the esophagus, which may lead to bleeding, ulcers or a narrowing of the esophagus from chronic scarring. GERD can also cause or contribute to asthma, pneumonia, hoarseness, chronic cough, laryngitis, and dental problems.

About 10% of GERD sufferers develop **Barrett’s esophagus**, a condition marked by an abnormal lining of the esophagus that develops in response to acid injury. Studies indicate Barrett’s esophagus is associated with an increased risk of developing esophageal cancer. Patients with Barrett’s esophagus should be closely monitored by a physician.
Background on the Heartburn Awareness Challenge

The Heartburn Awareness Challenge was launched as an official APhA-ASP National Patient Care project in 2004. Since that time, over 60,000 individuals have been screened for heartburn symptoms. In 2011 alone:

- Number of schools participating in 2011 campaign → 53
- Number of students participating in 2011 campaign → 2,501
- Number of patients screened in 2011 campaign → 6,670
- Number of patients educated (received Health & Wellness/Clinical Services & reached through public relations initiatives) in 2011 campaign → 969,249

*Please note, the data above reflects six months of activity rather than 12 months due to a change in the reporting cycle.

Heartburn Awareness Challenge Awards

APhA-ASP recognized each chapter that implemented a Heartburn Awareness Challenge program in their community. In addition, one Chapter from each of the 8 APhA-ASP regions and 1 national winner was recognized during the APhA Annual Meeting & Exposition at the APhA-ASP Opening General Session, in Student Pharmacist magazine, and on the APhA website. For more information on the Operation Self-Care reporting process, please refer to the “Reporting Guidelines” section of this planning guide.

Highlights from the 2011 Award Recipients

2011 Heartburn Awareness Challenge

National Winner: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Pharmacy

Heartburn Tracker App – Students developed a heartburn tracker app which contains information to raise public awareness about heartburn, and also allows patients to track their specific heartburn triggers and determine the most effective heartburn treatments based on their lifestyle.

uamsstudentpharmacist.com

Region 1 Winner: The University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy

Face of Pharmacy Day – Health topic booths were set up at the State House to raise awareness of the many services pharmacists provide. Students and pharmacists were able to interact with legislators and demonstrated professionalism and health care knowledge.
Region 2 Winner: West Virginia University School of Pharmacy

Triple S Harley Davidson Chili Cook-Off – The event took place at the Harley Davidson store in Morgantown, WV. 75 community members attended the event and had an opportunity to be counseled on heartburn.

Region 3 Winner: University of Florida College of Pharmacy

Heartburn Presentation for Expectant Families – At Winnie Palmer Hospital, student pharmacists provided education on heartburn during pregnancy for 44 individuals via a presentation and Q&A session.

Region 4 Winner: University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy

UIC Health Professions Health Fair – The chapter collaborated with the UIC College of Medicine and UIC College of Dentistry to provide a free health fair at a local high school. Students were able to guide patients towards the best care possible to treat their heartburn symptoms and counseled patients in English and Spanish.

Region 5 Winner: University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy

Cafeteria Promotional Campaign – Facts about heartburn and treatment information were placed on napkin holders and table tents on every table in Dining Services and Kirby Plaza Cafeteria, on the Duluth campus. Students, staff, and faculty were able to view the cards during dining hours.

Region 6 Winner: The University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy

Tailgating and Brown Bagging – Student pharmacists talked with game fans and distributed decorated brown bags that include items such as “Get Heartburn Smart” brochure and a “Stop and Select” guide, antacid samples, Prilosec coupons, heartburn-friendly recipes, and vials from the Vial of Life committee.
Region 7 Winner: The University of Utah College of Pharmacy

Health and Wellness Fair – The Heartburn Awareness booth provided student pharmacists with an opportunity to educate their peers on the symptoms and proper management of heartburn.

Region 8 Winner: University of the Pacific Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Retirement Home Heartburn Presentation – The presentation highlighted the incidence and frequency of occurrence of heartburn in elderly patients. The presentation emphasized lifestyle changes and possible drug interactions when patients are taking medications for chronic conditions and pharmacological agents used to treat heartburn. Time for Q&A was provided afterwards.
The American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) is pleased to introduce Operation Self-Care, a national patient education campaign supported by Procter & Gamble.

During the 2012-2013 cycle, student pharmacists across the country will focus on helping heartburn sufferers Get Heartburn Smart and live healthier, more productive lives. As a chapter advisor, your role is to act as a consultant to your chapter and its leaders. As APhA staff, we wanted to provide you with some of the tools necessary for your chapter to educate heartburn sufferers and achieve success with this new patient care project.

- Since patient data will be collected during the project, find out if the project needs IRB approval through your university. Many of you already have this process in place, but please be aware that depending on your school’s protocol, this can take weeks to months. As an advisor, you will have to guide your chapter through this process.

- Ensure that the patient data is shredded after any patient follow up and after the project report has been submitted to APhA headquarters (due July 15).

- Check with the Operation Self-Care coordinator from your chapter to be sure that licensed pharmacists are present at all times during each event. Make sure that you comply with your state laws. You will also want to verify that all pharmacists assisting with your events are covered with their own personal liability insurance.

- You may want to consider working with the legal team on your campus to develop a photo release form for any photos taken during your events. This is especially important if you plan to show your patient’s faces in the photos.

This national patient care project provides a unique avenue for your chapter members to develop their presentation and communication skills, increase clinical confidence, and enhance leadership abilities. Together, you and your chapter can make the Operation Self-Care a great success!