APhA–PAC Endorses Pharmacist Buddy Carter for Congress

APhA is very proud to support and endorse Georgia State Senator, Buddy Carter, a pharmacist running to represent Georgia’s first district in Congress. Sen. Carter earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Pharmacy from the University of Georgia and has been a pharmacist for over 30 years. His experience as a healthcare professional and pharmacy owner makes him uniquely qualified for Congress. Jonathan Marquess, APhA Board of Trustees member, has known Sen. Carter for years and says the state senator “is very knowledgeable on pharmacy issues and would represent us well. We need a pharmacist in Congress!”
Buddy Carter took time out of his busy campaign schedule to answer the following questions for APhA members.

Why is it important to have a pharmacist in Congress?
Of the 435 members of the House of Representatives and the 100 members of the U.S. Senate, there is not a single pharmacist. Ours is, in theory, a representative government. Without a pharmacist in Congress, it is more difficult to pursue our issues and initiatives than it would be if there were members that understood our perspective first-hand. It’s especially important while our healthcare system is undergoing dramatic changes to have leaders that have been in the trenches on healthcare issues before and that understand the importance of the relationship between a healthcare service provider and the patient. Remember, no one can represent us like one of us.

Electing responsible and responsive leaders to Congress and those who truly understand our profession is vital to the future of pharmacy.

What do you hope to accomplish if you win the election?
My goal is to represent the first congressional district effectively while maintaining my core priorities of fiscal conservatism. I also want to be part of the solutions to the problems we face as a nation, particularly those relating to healthcare.

How can pharmacists affect the political and policy process to ensure the future of their profession?
Any pharmacist who thinks that politics doesn’t impact our profession is just kidding themselves. The laws written and passed into law by Congress have a direct impact on pharmacy.

How does your experience as a pharmacist help you in the world of politics?
As a practicing retail pharmacist for over 33 years, I have dealt with patients regarding one of their most important issues: their health. Pharmacy is one of the most trusted professions around and this has helped me tremendously in politics both with my constituents and with my legislative colleagues who seek me out on healthcare issues.

How big of a role is healthcare playing in your campaign?
No question about it—everywhere we go Obamacare is the number one issue that people want to talk about. There is no better time for pharmacy to be at the table than during this discussion.

Why is it important to the health-care system for pharmacists to obtain provider status?
Healthcare delivery will be enhanced as pharmacists are one of the most readily accessible healthcare providers. This is particularly true in rural areas. The pharmacists who are graduating today are some of the most clinically gifted students in healthcare and they are well prepared to provide much needed services. It would be an injustice to the healthcare delivery system not to have pharmacists involved.

For more information on Buddy Carter’s campaign, please go to his website at http://www.buddycarterforcongress.com/

Pictured left to right: State Senator Buddy Carter, Pamala Marquess, GPhA President, and Jonathan Marquess, APhA Board of Trustees member.
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Our thanks to our supporters, fighting for the future of pharmacy. The following APhA members contributed $100 or more in 2013.

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APhA-PAC is bipartisan and its mission is to support candidates for federal office who have demonstrated support for pharmacy issues and recognize the value of pharmacists in the health care system.
Throughout the year, APhA members have taken time out of their busy schedules to travel to Washington, DC to meet with members of Congress and their staff. Constituents play an ever-increasing role in public policy making. Legislators and their staff want to hear from actual pharmacists, their constituents, and what they are doing to improve healthcare in their communities while reducing healthcare costs. APhA members help Congress better understand issues affecting pharmacy and how pharmacists can affect the delivery of quality care. Active APhA members donating their time and knowledge in Washington, DC help APhA develop stronger relationships on Capitol Hill.

- The House Community Pharmacy Caucus, chaired by Reps. Austin Scott (R-GA) and Peter Welch (D-VT), hosted a briefing in June, on “Medication Therapy Management”. Expert panelists gave an overview of H.R. 1024, Medication Therapy Empowerment Act. APhA Board of Trustee member, Jonathan Marquess, presented information about provider status.
- APhA student members flew into Washington for the Summer Leadership Institute and met with members of Congress and their staff to advocate for pharmacy and describe their experiences in the transformation of the healthcare system. For the first time, APhA-PAC held a successful fundraiser with the students.
- In September, the Board of Trustees and executives of state pharmacy associations traveled to Washington to educate their members of Congress and staff on the importance of pharmacists being recognized as providers in the healthcare system.
- During American Pharmacists Month, Project IMPACT: Diabetes participants came to Washington and educated policymakers on the results of their hard work. Attendees, including pharmacists and other providers, told their personal stories of working on collaborative healthcare teams that treated more than 2,000 uninsured, under-insured, homeless and other people highly affected by diabetes.
- In November, APhA co-sponsored the first ever pharmacist-led health fair on Capitol Hill where more than 75 pharmacists performed free health screenings. The screenings included bone density, glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure, and medication consultations. Over 200 members of Congress, staff, and the general public were screened. Reps. Austin Scott and Peter Welch both spoke at the event about the critical role community pharmacists play in the healthcare system.
- In November, H.R 3204 Drug Quality and Security Act was signed into law by President Obama. The legislation distinguishes compounders engaged in traditional pharmacy practice (ie: office use or one product per one patient prescription) from those making large volumes of compounded drugs without individual prescriptions. APhA endorsed the bill and active APhA members helped the bill pass Congress by contacting their legislators.
- In December, the House Community Pharmacy Caucus held a Pharmacy 101 briefing. Representing APhA was Cherokee Layson-Wolf, PharmD, CGP, BCACP, FAPhA, Associate Dean of Student Affairs at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. Cherokee described pharmacist education, licensure, and continuing pharmacy education by way of informing those in the audience on the extent of pharmacists’ knowledge and capabilities. APhA, NACDS, and NCPA asked for congressional support of the MTM legislation and noted the need to pay pharmacists for their patient care services. Almost 50 staffers from congressional offices and pharmacy groups attended.
As APhA fights for recognition of pharmacists’ services, APhA-PAC has been connecting members to their legislators all over the country. APhA-PAC was able to support 38 pharmacy-friendly members of Congress or candidates in 2013. APhA-PAC is a crucial tool in educating legislators on the importance of recognizing the value of pharmacists’ services. These policymakers continuously fight for the future of pharmacy and a contribution from APhA-PAC shows support from the entire profession.

Advocacy has the greatest impact on the community level since members of Congress depend on their constituents for reelection. Since healthcare remains a major national issue, an expert, such as a pharmacist, will have the knowledge to help legislators make the most informed decisions. All APhA members must invest time and resources in political advocacy to ensure the best outcomes for patient quality care and access. The future of healthcare is changing and now is the time to get involved.

Several of our most active APhA members were able to inform their own members of Congress on the issues most vital to pharmacists and their patients. On behalf of APhA-PAC, these members attended campaign events to discuss key APhA issues:

• **Rep. Raul Ruiz, MD (D-CA):** Rep. Raul Ruiz spoke at the APhA-PAC2013 Political Leadership reception in Los Angeles. Rep. Ruiz is a first-term member of Congress who is trained in emergency medicine and has professional experience with pharmacists. He spoke of the importance of community service and political involvement. He encouraged APhA members to “be involved in all levels of government that make rules on how you practice pharmacy in your community.”

• **Rep. Jason Smith (R-MO):** Ron Fitzwater, CEO of the Missouri Pharmacy Association, hosted a fundraiser for candidate Jason Smith with the help of APhA-PAC. Jason Smith successfully won the open seat of Missouri’s 8th district. He is now a pharmacy-friendly member of Congress.

• **Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Rep. Bruce Braley (D-IA):** President Steve Simenson and APhA-PAC Chair Steve Firman attended a fundraiser for Senator Amy Klobuchar and Rep. Bruce Braley. Congressman Braley is running for Senate in Iowa. He recognized APhA in his presentation.

• **Senator Al Franken (D-MN) Event Co-Hosted by APhA-PAC:** Sen. Al Franken spoke at the Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis and then attended a fundraiser at the home of Bruce Thompson, a member of the APhA Government Affairs Committee. Bruce Thompson and the Senator discussed transitions of care and MTM services. President Steve Simenson, who also attended the event, explained that obtaining provider status would enable more positive contributions to patient quality care. Senator Franken was supportive of pharmacists being recognized in the Social Security Act and is willing to listen to APhA’s future proposals. APhA looks forward to working with Sen. Franken and his office.

The 2014 campaigns are heating up and now is the time for all APhA members to get involved. If you are interested in representing APhA in your district, please contact Lauren DePutter at ldeputter@aphanet.org.
PACs and Provider Status

The featured graphs compare the fundraising history of APhA-PAC to the political action committees of the most recent healthcare associations that obtained provider status throughout the years. These association PACs include the National Association of Social Workers, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The graphs depict similar patterns of strong fundraising by the groups who achieved provider status over the course of many years. Political action committees play an integral part in advocacy campaigns by helping healthcare association members educate their legislators on the value of the services they provide to their communities across the country.
10 Ways to Become Politically Active in Your Community

1. Learn and understand APhA’s legislative positions and how to effectively communicate with your elected representatives at http://www.pharmacist.com/apha-legislative-action-center.

2. Help educate other APhA members within your community on how reform will affect the future of pharmacy and why it is important to become involved in the political process.

3. Establish and develop a continuing personal relationship with your elected officials. As a constituent and an expert on pharmacy, you will be asked for your opinion on the current state of health-care reform and other pertinent federal legislation.

4. Stay updated on your federal legislators’ voting history and activities. Express your opinion on your legislators’ recent activities, and your stature as an advocate will grow as will their understanding of APhA’s policy positions.

5. Maintain your constituent relationship with your legislators to keep communication open.

6. Invite your legislators to various community activities, such as small social gatherings or award ceremonies with other APhA members present.

7. Invite members of Congress to tour your pharmacy, clinic, hospital, or school; this will allow them to be truly immersed in the day-to-day life of a pharmacist.

8. Stay up-to-date about upcoming local political functions and fundraisers.

9. Become involved personally and financially in a local incumbent or candidate’s campaign who is a proponent of APhA issues.

10. Become an APhA Congressional Key Contact volunteer. Contact Lauren DePutter at ldeputter@aphanet.org or (202) 223-7181 to learn more.

Join the fight for the future of pharmacy

Yes! Count me in. I want to join my colleagues in the fight for the future of pharmacy. (APhA-PAC can only accept personal checks or credit cards.)

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APhA-PAC
2215 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20037

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All contributions are voluntary and guidelines for contributing are merely suggestions, and in no way affect your membership in the APhA. Contributions to the APhA-PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Federal election law requires that we ask the information requested on the contribution card.

We are required by federal law to report your name, mailing address, occupation and employer information if your overall contributions exceed $200 in a calendar year. All corporate contributions to APhA-PAC will be used for educational and administrative fees of APhA-PAC, and other activities permissible under federal law.