

Message From the Chair



Dear Colleagues,

Thanks to all who not only ran for Section positions but also to those who participated in the election process. All of the candidates would have made excellent Section Committee members and I would encourage everyone to continue to express interest and be involved in the coming years as your turn will come. I want to thank departing interim Committee members **Scott McCreddie**, **Mike Schlesselman** and **Jim Besier** for their commitment and support this past year. Their contributions were extraordinary but more importantly they played key roles in helping the Section become a reality. I'd like to congratulate and welcome back **Jeff Ramirez** (Director-At-Large for 2007-2008) and **Brent Fox** (Director-At-Large for 2008-2010) as now elected Executive Committee members and greet new members **John Poikonen** (Director-At-Large for 2007-2009) and **Dennis Tribble** (Chair-Elect for 2008-2009) who are no strangers to the pharmacy informatics community. And finally I would like to thank ASHP leaders and the nominations committee for their outstanding work in transitioning and positioning the Section for success and more importantly preserving their energy.

The [Section Advisory Groups and Task Forces](#) are off and running- sorting through a number of new opportunities and other projects in various stages of completion. These groups are the Section's life lines and will be utilized to engineer and implement member initiatives. As these groups put their boots on the ground I would encourage other members to help grow our membership. I am unaware of any health system pharmacist that isn't utilizing or taking advantage of some sort of technology to support their practice or profession. Virtually every healthcare related IT solution deployed regardless of whether or not it directly affects the medication use process will eventually alter how the pharmacy practitioner approaches his or her work. That said every practicing or for that matter non-practicing health system pharmacist at the very least should be a secondary member of the Section of Informatics and Technology. I ask every Section member to articulate to at least one of your colleagues the importance of joining our Section.

Before turning out the lights I have one message I'd encourage members to consider advocating as we move beyond our infancy. From where I sit there appears to be a huge disparity in the type of work we are asked to do and knowledge or expertise we must bring to the table in the current environment. Depending on how your organization has aligned itself to address these large over arching healthcare IT initiatives many of us find ourselves ill-equipped to oversee the breadth and depth of support and oversight required. Today like most I was asked questions ranging from why our hospital information management system was creating inappropriate accounts on our automated dispensing system med stations to what I think some of the key barriers are for the organization as it looks towards e-prescribing. As a Section we must support and provide education initiatives to prepare members to handle the day to day technological issues and be able to deliver our vision for the future of medication management supporting technologies and automation. More importantly we must influence pharmacy educators to build and offer curriculum in the Colleges of Pharmacy to at the very least provide a starter set of skills needed to address our current and future roles in the field of informatics. In his new book "The Age of Turbulence" Alan Greenspan appeals for educational reform to address the shortage of our skilled labor force. He states "The world is moving too fast for political and bureaucratic dawdling". College of Pharmacy educators must engage the increasingly competitive high tech world to better prepare future practitioners and pharmacy leaders in the field of informatics. Despite the challenges in terms of backgrounds, skills and knowledge required in this somewhat heterogeneous field informatics is evolving into a profession. As such educational leaders must come

together to outline competencies and curricula for the general categories of informaticians.

I can't thank all of you enough for all you do and hope to see many of you at the Midyear Clinical meeting in Las Vegas. There are many educational and networking opportunities planned for this year's meeting. Please watch your e-mail for a complete schedule prior to the meeting.

Sincerely,

Mark H. Siska, B.S. Pharm., MBA/TM
Assistant Director Informatics & Technology
Pharmacy Services, Mayo Clinic Rochester
Chair, Section of Pharmacy Informatics and Technology (2007-2008)
sections@ashp.org

Updated: October 2007