

Message from the Chair – October 2010



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Fall is Falling

The calendar is moving faster than ever...or so it seems. It's already the middle of October and we are all planning and celebrating various fall and winter activities, such as **National Hospital and Health-System Pharmacy Week October 17th-23rd**, Fall Harvest, Thanksgiving, to name a few. One **major issue** on the minds of every health system pharmacist and technician that requires planning *but* is not a cause of celebration is the **drug shortage** dilemma. Every pharmacy practice group within our **Section of Inpatient Care Practitioners (SICP)** has been affected by shortages. Whether you are an Investigational Drug Service (IDS) pharmacist or a Medication Safety Officer, a frontline inpatient practitioner or an OR/Anesthesiology pharmacist, a pharmacist in a Critical Access Hospital, Small and Rural Hospital or a pharmacist in frontier America - no matter your type of practice or area of specialty, you and most importantly your patients, have been affected by this national crisis! Large hospitals can barely get enough allocation to treat patients. Small hospitals either receive no drug supply, due to insufficient use and therefore not qualifying for direct orders from manufacturers, or they are forced to purchase quantities that will expire prior to the drug's use. In the midst of working with wholesalers and manufacturers to get product, you receive calls from secondary companies offering medications at hugely inflated prices with questionable pedigree. How these companies procure product before backorders are filled is frustrating, to say the least. Some manufacturers are tracking this type of activity and taking action to lessen its occurrence. This is a giant step in the right direction in addressing the ethical aspect of this issue, but it is still not enough.

It bears repeating that patient care and safety are at the forefront as we look for safe alternatives and conserve supplies for emergencies and our chronically ill patients. As has frequently been the case, ASHP is always front and center in providing the necessary tools to aid its membership during times of crisis. The listserves serve as a valuable member resource for information and coping strategies. ASHP's drug shortages' resource center (<http://www.ashp.org/shortages>) is another excellent resource particularly as it allows members to report information on medication shortages which assists in keeping the center's information both current and relevant. **The Section of Inpatient Care Practitioners' Section Advisory Group (SAG) on Medication Safety** is also addressing the drug shortage. For its third

annual medication safety webinar series, the SAG will host a webinar in November that deals with this very topic. You can register for this webinar at:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/488353600>

ASHP LIVE Webinar Networking Session: The Long and *Short* of it – Strategic Solutions for Managing Drug Shortages

This FREE ASHP membership benefit webinar networking session will be held Thursday – November 4, 2010 from 2:00PM to 3:30PM EST

Objectives

Following completion of this webinar, participants should be able to:

- Describe the FDA's and ASHP's roles in managing drug shortages;
- Understand ASHP's guidelines for drug shortage management in health-systems;
- Understand the ISMP survey results regarding the national implications and impact of drug shortages on medication safety;
- Apply practical solutions and strategies for managing drug shortages;
- Discuss the therapeutic, leadership and communication opportunities for pharmacists in the management of drug shortages;
- Share Best Practices from other hospitals/healthcare systems in the management of drug shortages.

Without assigning blame, this elite panel of presenters will provide expert analysis of and rationale for pharmacist leadership and management of the drug shortage crisis. One medication that has not surfaced as a major player in the drug shortage cast of characters is the influenza vaccine. Fortunately, inpatient and outpatient vaccination programs are in full swing across the country! We extend kudos to the vaccine manufacturers for keeping up with the influenza and immunization demand. As healthcare professionals, we must do our part to prevent the spread of influenza by getting vaccinated ourselves and encouraging our patients to get vaccinated as well. For more information, check out ASHP's influenza and immunization website at <http://www.youcanstoptheflu.com/resources.html>

While addressing the drug shortage, ASHP has still been engaged in other activities. A good example is the recently held ASHP Policy week that convened September 20 – 23, 2010 at ASHP's headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland. This week of meetings of the five ASHP Councils and the Commission on Affiliate Relations concluded with the signature Legislative Day on September 23. Members of ASHP's Board of Directors, the various Councils and Commission, and ASHP staff (including staff representation from the Section of Inpatient Care Practitioners) met with Congressional representatives and senators on the Hill to discuss key pharmacy practice issues and ASHP priorities. Dale English and Randy Kuiper, both former chairs of our Section and current Council and BOD members respectively, participated in Legislative Day. In a future Chairs message, I will ask them to weigh in on their experience as well as relay the importance of pharmacist grassroots advocacy.

The top ASHP advocacy priorities are:

1. **Medication Safety** - Preventing harm, ensuring the safety of the medication-use process (e.g., bar coding; behind-the-counter drugs; increased FDA funding, authority)
2. **Reimbursement Issues** - Developing adequate reimbursement structures; paying pharmacists for patient care services (e.g., payment for pharmacists' services; CPT codes; AWP, ASP, AMP)
3. **Quality Improvement** - Applying evidence, improving outcomes (e.g., medication management standards; pay-for-performance; quality standards)
4. **Pharmacist Workforce** - Solving the challenges of staffing, credentialing, and leadership (e.g., loan forgiveness programs; pharmacist shortages; credentialing)
5. **Technician Workforce** - Achieving standardized education, training, certification, and registration
6. **Pharmacy Residencies Funding** - Expanding funding for pharmacy residency training
7. **Healthcare Reform Legislation** –Reform of Delivery and Payment Systems, Quality Measurements, Comparative Effectiveness Research and addressing Pharmacy Workforce needs and demands

Please visit the website <http://www.ashp.org/advocacy/> for more information on policy alerts and how ASHP is pursuing its Advocacy Agenda.

Enjoy and celebrate National Hospital and Health-System Pharmacy Week, Fall Harvest, Thanksgiving and the sundry other events time nor space will permit me to list; but, while doing so, let's accept the challenge to show leadership on the drug shortage crisis. By doing so, we help keep our patients safe. By doing so, we demonstrate the crucial role pharmacists play in the provision of safe medication therapy management. By doing so, we help move the practice of pharmacy forward.

***In-Patient-ly** Yours,*

Brian Benson, Pharm.D.

2010-2011 Chair, ASHP's **Section of Inpatient Care Practitioners**

The "In" Section: Influential, Innovative, Indispensible

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