

Commission on Affiliate Relations
New Practitioner Experience
Sue Haight, Pharm.D.

I was very excited to learn that I was selected to be one of fourteen members on the Commission on Affiliate Relations (COAR) this year. Being part of COAR meant that I would be taking part of ASHP's Policy Week in Bethesda, MD – held just blocks from our new ASHP headquarters.

Networking started immediately once I arrived in Bethesda where I attended a lunch for new practitioners. From there we attended an orientation on the ASHP policy process and established our roles and outlined our expectations as committee members. After orientation, we broke off into our respective groups to learn more about the other members that I would be spending the next few days with. The group of COAR members I had the privilege of working with came with different backgrounds and from different areas of the country: New York, North Carolina, Missouri, Alabama, Rhode Island, Texas, California, Colorado, Kansas, Michigan, Kentucky and Maryland. The group's collective experience could have been intimidating – but quickly I learned that my input as a new practitioner was valued and sought out on the different issues we discussed. I was also given the opportunity to be a discussion leader on one of the agenda topics. The experience I had serving on COAR exceeded all of my expectations and I would recommend to any new practitioner to pursue a position on this commission.

Policy Week ended with a day on Capitol Hill to meet with the congressional staff of Minnesota to advocate for our profession as health-system pharmacists. This was my first trip to Capitol Hill. At the end of the day I fondly reflected back on the experience of meeting with the congressional staff of Norm Coleman, Amy Klobuchar, James Oberstar and Betty McCollum to advocate two discussion items: the critical role that pharmacists play in ensuring that medications are used safely, efficiently and in a cost-effective way through Medication Therapy Management services, and restoring the funding for PGY-2 specialty pharmacy residencies. I added to the conversation by speaking on a personal level about the experiences I have had in my specialized pharmacy management residency. We were well prepared to discuss these agenda items, making for a great discussion. It was a great experience to voice our interests to state congressional members with other Minnesota health-system pharmacists.

Being part of the ASHP advocacy team may start at Capitol Hill, but lasts for a year. To encourage a continued relationship with our now established connections in D.C., we extended an invitation to our Congress members to visit our practice sites to learn more about health-system pharmacists in a hospital setting. I hope one of them accepts the offer!

Sue Haight, Pharm.D.
Pharmacy Practice Management Resident
University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview
420 Delaware Street SE

Minneapolis, MN 55455

Office: 612-273-6919

Pager: 612-899-7592

Fax: 612-273-4954