

In the Spotlight



Scott M. Mark, Pharm.D., M.S., M.Ed., FACHE, FABC, FASHP
Director of Pharmacy at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
Vice Chair and Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy

Scott M. Mark, Pharm.D., M.S., M.Ed., FACHE, FABC, FASHP earned his Bachelor of Science in pharmacy from Ferris State and his Pharm.D. from the University of Kentucky. He then went on to complete a two year residency in Pharmacy Administration at the Ohio State University Medical Center earning a M.S. in Management from Ohio State during that time. Dr. Mark also holds a M.Ed. from the University of Illinois and is currently completing his thesis for his M.B.A from the University of London. He is a graduate of both the Pharmacy Leadership Institute at the Boston University School of Management and the Wharton School Executive Management Program for Pharmacy Leaders at the University of Pennsylvania. He publishes and presents regularly on a variety of pharmacy topics.

Overview of the Facility

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) is a \$7 billion organization and employs more than 50,000. UPMC is an organization consisting of 20 hospitals, 400 doctors' offices and outpatient sites, and dozens of freestanding cancer centers, rehabilitation centers, imaging centers, and senior living facilities. UPMC partners with the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences – ranked sixth in National Institutes of Health funding – in the areas of research and education. UPMC's innovations reach far beyond the boundaries of the United States. Most recently, UPMC established an International and Commercial Services Division to actively export UPMC's medical and technological expertise into international markets. UPMC operates a transplant facility in Italy, two cancer centers and a hospital in Ireland, and an emergency medical system in Qatar, and recently announced the addition of two facilities in Cyprus. UPMC is a leader in IT, with partnerships with GE Healthcare, IBM, and Alcatel-Lucent. UPMC has advanced the quality and efficiency of health care and is consistently ranked among "America's Best Hospitals" by *U.S. News & World Report*, a designation, which was given to only 19 of more than 5,400 eligible hospitals in the United States in 2008.

Dr. Mark serves as the Director of Pharmacy at UPMC Presbyterian-Shadyside, Vice Chair of Pharmacy Systems and an Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, and the Director of the University of Pittsburgh Pharmacy Practice Management Residency Program. In this role he is responsible for 1,093 inpatient beds, and ambulatory facilities spread over two acute, tertiary care, teaching campuses in Pittsburgh, PA. His recent operational focus has been on developing inpatient and outpatient clinical practice sites, expanding the role of the pharmacist in the hospital's care model, and incorporating automation solutions to improve pharmacy safety and efficiency. Dr. Mark's academic focus has been on developing a comprehensive pharmacy management curriculum within the School, including a management track for PharmD students, the creation of two masters degrees (MS and MPH), and the creation of a 2-year hospital pharmacy management residency and a 2-year community pharmacy management residency.

Recent Challenges

Pharmacy Practice Model

One of the major issues facing health system pharmacy is the goal of expanding the clinical functions of the pharmacy practice model in a time of economic downturns and personnel shortages. Dr. Mark has coordinated the implementation of a unit based pharmacy practice model at UPMC and reduced the vacancy rate from 30% to less than 5%. The new model utilizes centralized robotics and carousels to dispense medications across multiple campuses and deploys pharmacists to the patient care units enabling them to participate in medical rounds, interact directly with patients and other healthcare providers and better integrate pharmacy in the provision of care. The pharmacists have been well received on the units and serve as valuable members of the team. The unit based practice model allows the pharmacy department to better align the value that the pharmacist brings with the needs of the patients. Dr. Mark points out “the value proposition that pharmacy brings to the team has changed. We are now an information-based profession with a wealth of knowledge. Unit-based care models bring that knowledge directly to the bedside”. Dr. Mark sees the pharmacists as an essential member of a patient’s care team, “As medical care becomes more specialized the need for a medication expert to coordinate all of the different therapies grows. Going forward, this will be the new value proposition of our profession.” The introduction of such a dramatic change required strategy, planning and an understanding of the role pharmacists need to play. A key element of this change was the collaboration of the faculty into the integrated model. The goal at UPMC is to continue expanding this level of service to all units and all shifts.

Pharmacy Practice Management Residency

When Dr. Mark arrived at UPMC in 2004 one of his first goals was to develop a pharmacy practice management residency. He started the program in his first year and has developed it into a robust program accepting four candidates per year into the 2-year hospital pharmacy program, and one into the new community pharmacy management program which is being offered in collaboration with CVS pharmacy. The community-based management program is the first of its kind in the country. Both programs are combined with a master’s degree options which was subsequently built. The most critical step to developing a residency program is getting the program supported by hospital administration. Dr. Mark was able to communicate the exceptional return on investment a pharmacy practice management residency programs offered the hospital and the program has demonstrated this to be true since its inception. Pharmacy Practice Management Residents have increased the management team’s capacity to move initiatives forward and allows Dr. Mark the opportunity to mentor future leaders.

Advice

Dr. Mark advises pharmacists to determine what their passion is and to focus their practice in that area. Dr. Mark points out “One of the great things about pharmacy is the wide variety of practice options available and the breath of our training which allows for career detours”. Dr. Mark also recommends that practitioners serve in ASHP positions. Pharmacy interacts with every discipline in a hospital and we are looked upon to lead diverse initiatives from medication safety and clinical programs to strategic planning and informatics. ASHP provides valuable leadership opportunities and a laboratory to learn and study from the best leaders in the profession.

Value of ASHP Membership

Dr. Mark is an active member of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists having served on Councils, as a Delegate to the House, and as Chair of various advisory groups and as Chair of the Section of Pharmacy Practice Managers. Dr. Mark joined ASHP initially to network. ASHP is more than a place to network; however, it is an ongoing source of professional growth and development. It provides a way for pharmacists to re-invent themselves. “One of the great and unique things about the pharmacy profession is the willingness of pharmacists to share their knowledge with fellow practitioners. ASHP membership provides individuals the means to tap into that knowledge sharing.” says Dr. Mark. Another valuable resource provided by ASHP membership is mentorship. National leaders in all the areas of pharmacy practice make themselves assessable through ASHP to serve as mentors. Dr. Mark has been able to receive mentorship from fellow leaders and serve as a mentor to others through ASHP.