

## In the Spotlight – October 2013



**Name:** Sue Skledar, RPh, MPH, FASHP

**Title:** Clinical Pharmacy Specialist and Associate Professor

**Work Location:** University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy (PITT); Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

### Her Story

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Sue Skledar received her Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy from the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, and her Master of Public Health Degree from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health.

Sue's career at UPMC and PITT combined has spanned 25 years, and has involved growth from graduate pharmacist to clinical specialist, and voluntary faculty to Associate Professor. She enjoys teaching and mentoring students and residents in concepts of institutional pharmacy practice, health care quality improvement, evidence-based medicine, and advanced practice roles for pharmacists in the hospital setting. Her experiences at UPMC have involved work as a staff pharmacist, hospital-based unit clinical pharmacist, operations and decentralized pharmacy manager, and from 1996-2012, director of UPMC Presbyterian's Drug Use and Disease State Management Program, which was the formulary management program for the facility. Through that time with the DUDSM Team and interdisciplinary clinicians, over 400 evidence-based protocols, practice guidelines, and medication safety initiatives were implemented, including:

- Evidence-grading system and systematic approach for formulary decision-making
- Creation of a therapeutic interchange program and formulary restriction process including decision-support tools such as order sets and rules
- Standardization of infusion concentrations across 12 UPMC hospitals
- Implementation of smart pumps across UPMC's inpatient facilities and outpatient cancer centers, which now are over 20 in number

### Overview of the Health System

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UPMC operates more than 20 community, academic, and specialty hospitals; and 400 outpatient sites. It is an integrated health care delivery system enterprise headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA. UPMC has centers of excellence in transplantation, oncology, neurosurgery, psychiatry, rehabilitation, geriatrics, and women's health. The health system is closely affiliated

with the University of Pittsburgh.

## Significant Projects

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Beginning in 2012, the systematic formulary approach and infrastructure was expanded across UPMC Health System and Sue's role evolved into formulary management and drug use policy development across all 15 of UPMC's inpatient facilities to help guide system-wide change and best practices. This reflects her practice site today, and thus she is able to work with clinical pharmacy specialists, faculty, physicians, administrators, and many other interdisciplinary providers and trainees from across multiple practice settings to create protocols and policies for safe, evidence-based, and cost-effective use of medications.

## Advice for New Practitioners

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Always keep learning as the profession continues to evolve! The area of drug use policy and protocol development is emerging as pharmacists are looked to for guidance on evidence-based decisions related to new medication place-in-therapy, therapeutic controversies, prevention of patient harm, and medication safety related to ever-increasing drug shortages and recalls.

Additionally, as we work to develop guidelines, which can be quite complex, it is equally important to focus on successful and effective implementation of the guidelines, which can be just, if not more, challenging, especially in today's technology era. It is critical to have implementation tools for formulary and medication safety enforcement, so clinicians at the bedside know the latest information on all steps of the medication use process, from prescribing to patient monitoring. Realizing and taking steps to ensure the full "circle of life" of a guideline is addressed – meaning the continuum of development, successful implementation, tracking outcomes, and keeping the guideline current is one of the most critical learning points for a new clinician in this area.

## Current Involvement with ASHP

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Sue became involved with ASHP as a pharmacy student, to continue to grow and learn with the profession and to understand and stay in-step with pharmacy practice across the United States. She has held many different appointed or elected positions throughout ASHP over the years.

Sue has been a long-standing active member of ASHP, and is currently a member of the Section of Inpatient Care Practitioners (SICP), serving as Vice-Chair of the Educational Steering Committee. She is also a member of the Section of the Clinical Specialists and Scientists, ASHP Quality Advocates, ASHP Task Force on Organizational Structure, and ASHP Connect.

In addition to the roles and positions, Sue works actively as an ASHP Student CV Review Mentor, Resident Poster Reviewer, and Midyear/Annual Meeting abstract reviewer.

### **Value of ASHP to Sue**

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As a practitioner, ASHP fosters collaboration across practice areas and allows clinicians to be at the forefront of emerging pharmacy practice issues. The opportunities to reach and interact with new learners (students, residents, and new practitioners) and experienced clinicians and health care pharmacy leaders are invaluable for life-long learning and career advancement.

“Through ASHP, I appreciate the ability to contribute to the profession by publishing practice innovations, assisting in producing high-quality educational sessions, and being able to provide input as a reviewer of publications, position statements, and other works for the profession. I have been able to experience the value of ASHP, and also know that the input of its many active members, is valued by ASHP.”

### **Value of ASHP for the Profession**

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ASHP provides a variety of ways to get involved in the profession. The organization provides education, advocacy, and excellent networking opportunities within pharmacy. All points of view of health-system pharmacy are voiced and this allows for collaboration that drives the profession forward.