



ASHP Meets with HHS Assistant Secretary for Health, Continues to Advocate for Patient Access to Pharmacist Care

July 8, 2021

Today, ASHP Chief Executive Officer Paul W. Abramowitz, ASHP Chief Operating Officer Kasey Thompson, members of ASHP's Government Relations Office, and ASHP member Vivian Bradley Johnson, senior vice president of clinical services, Parkland Health & Hospital System, met with Dr. Rachel Levine, assistant secretary for health in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to discuss pharmacists' role in patient care, mitigating health disparities in our country, and regulatory barriers preventing patients from receiving pharmacist care. ASHP addressed critical points as part of the discussion, including:

- **The Role of Health-System Pharmacists in Public Health and Patient Care:** ASHP highlighted our members' efforts on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response, including taking the lead on standing up and managing mass vaccination sites nationally, as well as ongoing work to advance patient care and the significant contributions pharmacists are uniquely able to provide to reduce disparities in access to care.
- **Mitigating Health Disparities:** Dr. Bradley Johnson provided a firsthand perspective of the work that Parkland Health & Hospital System has undertaken to expand access to care in the community, and the importance of leveraging pharmacists' expertise and training to address disparities in access to care for services such as COVID-19 testing and vaccinations as well as HIV prophylaxis, diabetes monitoring, and medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder.
- **Removing Regulatory Barriers:** ASHP stressed the importance of eliminating or substantially mitigating many of the current limitations on pharmacists' ability to provide patient care, including creating Medicare reimbursement mechanisms for pharmacist services, removing the X-waiver barrier to providing medication for opioid use disorder, and authorizing pharmacists to provide access to antivirals for flu, COVID-19, and HIV. ASHP also discussed the role telehealth has played in accessing care and the importance of making telehealth flexibilities permanent.

ASHP is very appreciative of the opportunity to showcase the work of our members. We look forward to continuing to work closely with HHS and the administration to advance pharmacists' role in expanding patients' access to pharmacist care and improving public health.