



## **ASHP Women in Pharmacy Leadership Steering Committee\* Final Report to the ASHP Board of Directors**

### **Introduction**

The ASHP Women in Pharmacy Leadership Steering Committee is pleased to present its final recommendations to the ASHP Board of Directors. ASHP convened a Steering Committee of women and men pharmacy leaders to provide recommendations to support women in achieving pharmacy leadership skills and roles at every level and practice setting. ASHP is committed to being responsive to the needs and changing dynamics of the pharmacy work force. Committee members represent a diverse group of pharmacy leaders from a variety of ages, practice settings and positions, and represent a wide range of career stages.

### **Purpose and Rationale for the Steering Committee**

The profession of pharmacy is rapidly evolving, and with it the needs of ASHP members are transforming. This includes the pharmacy workforce. Today, more than half of actively practicing pharmacists are female, and the mean Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) for men and women is equal. In addition, over the last 20 years, pharmacy school enrollment of women has increased, representing 61.4% of all first professional degree students, and 49.3% of all full-time graduate pharmacy students. Women are also graduating from pharmacy school at higher rates, and represent more than half of all practicing pharmacists. In contrast, over the last 20 years, men are retiring at a much faster rate than women. This has led to a greater percentage of women practicing in the profession.

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According to a Pew Research Center survey on women and leadership, key leadership traits such as intelligence and capacity for innovation are indistinguishable from men and women. As a whole, the pipeline for female leaders in pharmacy is widening. Women have also made inroads into leadership positions in recent decades. Even so, while the data shows that women represent the majority of pharmacists practicing today; however, they still occupy far too few leadership positions in the pharmacy profession, and in healthcare at large, particularly at senior leadership levels in proportion to the demographics. There are noticeable developments in the career paths of women, with fewer women populating the upward leadership path, despite being the demographic majority. The benefits of a diverse workforce are vast, and include different perspectives and experiences that ultimately contribute to better decision-making and a more productive and robust workplace.

The Steering Committee's intent is not focus on an issue of parity but instead focus on the issue as a business opportunity for the profession. The committee desires to present solutions to analyzing what is right with organizations and leaders that facilitate women for successful leadership careers and tap into the resulting competitive edge, and to offer options for consideration by individuals, leaders seeking to develop talent and for organizations to examine, understand and create change to identify and eliminate barriers women face uniquely in the leadership journey.

Throughout its history, ASHP periodically has made several significant organizational adjustments in response to changes or anticipated changes in its environment. The current work by the Women in Pharmacy Leadership Steering Committee is another step in this tradition of self-assessment. In addressing this workforce change, the Steering Committee affirms the overarching principle that fair and equitable leadership opportunities should be based on merit and qualifications, and provided to all pharmacists—women and men. The goal of the Steering Committee is to assist ASHP in identifying and bridging leadership gaps within pharmacy practice, and advancing professional development opportunities for all pharmacists. The Steering Committee conclude its final call in September 2016.

### **Issues for Women Pharmacy Leaders**

Much as been written in business literature about the benefits of diversity in the workplace. Facilitating women leadership is a business issue as much as a gender diversity issue. As an example, the workforce may not have been trained to recognize gender differences (such as different communications styles or career cycles) and it is important to become skilled in managing these differences that may contribute to better performance, innovation and outcomes. Business literature has demonstrated a positive correlation with gender balanced leadership teams and key performance indicators such as employee engagement, financial outcomes, retention, and customer satisfaction. Therefore, leadership teams with more gender balance produce better results.

There are a variety of issues that need to be addressed related to the leadership gender and demographic changes of the profession including succession planning and development of programs for emerging women leaders, effective recruitment and retention, merit-based systems, relationship building, gender style differences and leadership development needs, among others.

The need for formalized sponsorships is a leadership challenge for aspiring women pharmacy leaders. Sponsorship is a formal process between the sponsor and protégé that serves to identify, develop and support the growth of high-potential leadership. Sponsorship, which should not be mistaken for mentorship, is a continuous relationship between the sponsor and protégé that often includes endorsement from the sponsor of the protégé and invested assistance from the sponsor in helping to plan and execute the protégé's professional advancement throughout his/her career. Some ways that sponsors can help to promote a protégé are by providing access to professional networks, helping to highlight a protégé's achievements to executive leadership, and recommending a protégé for key promotions or assignments.

Not only is sponsorship beneficial to the protégé, but also to the sponsor and employer. First, sponsorship serves to advance a sponsor's career by helping to enhance their own leadership skills and establish a reputation as a quality leader who is invested in talent management. It also helps to create a "pay it forward" mentality that can perpetuate throughout the organization. Second, sponsorship helps employers by promoting high-performance employees. It supports the enhancement of employee engagement and talent development and decreases employee turnover. Pharmacy leaders should be provided with the workforce tools and training necessary to embrace sponsorships as a component of their professional role and responsibility.

Formalized sponsorships and/or other professional development programs should ideally begin at the employer-level and be incorporated into pharmacy school curricula. This will help to establish a foundation for pharmacy students and provide early exposure and access to career opportunities. It may also help to enhance the importance of soft skills needed for professional success (i.e. emotional intelligence, communication, teamwork/collaboration, adaptability, critical observation, and conflict resolution).

ACPE's revised 2016 Standard reaffirms the need for soft skills and ensures that pharmacy graduates are 'practice-ready' and 'team-ready' to work as healthcare providers and on interprofessional healthcare teams. Along with foundational knowledge (Standard 1) and essentials for practice and care (Standard 2), ACPE also identifies approaches to practice and care (Standard 3), such as problem-solving and cultural sensitivity and personal and professional development skills (Standard 4), such as self-awareness and professionalism as essential skills, abilities and behaviors all pharmacy graduates need to successfully contribute to the contemporary practice of pharmacy.

ASHP has sought feedback through the Steering Committee and through other areas to identify the potential needs of emerging women leaders. Concepts, ideas and preliminary recommendations were harvested and recorded from the small group discussions, larger formalized networking sessions at ASHP national meetings, focus groups, and online communities.

The following are examples of issues that members identified that warrant further discussion, consideration and development to evaluate potential recommendations for ASHP follow-up and introduction of programmatic offerings:

- Supporting women leader evolution
- Building Mentor-Coach-Sponsor programs and skills
- Providing information on successful life-career integration
- Educating both men and women on gender leadership strengths and differences
- Supporting women's leadership development including:
  - Creation of a personal and professional mission/vision and values
  - Building of self-confidence
  - Communication skills/strategies
- Brokerage mechanism(s) for collecting and sharing successes, stories and example scenarios of successful women leaders
- Providing skills-building for personal branding, influence, negotiation and marketing skills
- Developing formalized programs for career development strategies, and identifying and evaluating career opportunities
- Recognizing, understanding and eliminating gender bias in workplace culture
- Highlighting different (e.g. clinical vs. administrative) career paths/tracks for women to pursue
- Reviewing other healthcare professions' strategies for promoting women in leadership such as nursing, medicine, etc.

ASHP has committed to creating an environment for leadership development of the new generation of women pharmacy leaders. The Steering Committee endeavors to recommend the best ways that ASHP can be responsive to the needs of its members and will continue to be a leader in preparing members for the future.

### **Principles Supporting the Recommendations to ASHP**

1. Leadership development is a core function of ASHP and the ASHP Research and Education Foundation and is of strategic importance to the Society and its members.
2. Gender balanced leadership teams and the prevalence of women in leadership positions correlate with improved performance indicators. Therefore facilitating women leaders is a business issue versus a gender issue. Both men and women

- stand to benefit from the discussion and enhanced presence of women in leadership.
3. ASHP as a membership society is in a unique position to facilitate and expedite the development of women leaders.
  4. Engender a high level of member involvement and commitment to support emerging women leaders.
  5. Key factors create positive career opportunities (career inflection points) that are pivotal to leadership advancement and success. Examples of career inflection points include factors such as education and training (type of additional degrees), experience (clinical/administrative), career management (risk taking), family (support for/by partner), networking (professional organizations, women's groups), mentorship and sponsorship. These inflection points should be communicated and supported by ASHP.
  6. ASHP is committed to supporting leadership roles for women in clinical, administrative, academic, and all job functions.

#### **Recommendations to ASHP:**

1. Allocate resources strategically to create and sustain specific ASHP services including meetings and education, skills building programs, networking forums to support career development strategies and other resources.
2. Work-life integration is an ongoing issue for all pharmacy professionals (men and women). Identify and share strategies for successful work-life integration with members.
3. Highlight the differences between role models, mentors, coaches and sponsors and foster the development of these relationships among its members. Specifically, the concept of sponsorship should be introduced to young professionals.
4. Develop a strategy to collect baseline and ongoing metrics regarding women in leadership positions within the pharmacy profession. Data exists within the general workforce and within healthcare but not within the pharmacy profession.
5. Proactively collect and share stories, case studies and scenarios of how women have addressed gender, workplace, work-life integration, and leadership challenges.
6. To encourage volunteer opportunities for engagement at the national, state, and student level that support a variety of ways for contribution, reflecting flexibility of time commitments and various means for participation.
7. Share successful pharmacy employer policies and practices that reflect supportive work environments.
8. Study pharmacy-specific career inflection points including individual, organizational and societal factors and promote these leverage points.
9. Actively cultivate and stimulate career aspirations of the pharmacy workforce.
10. Facilitate leadership development throughout all functional roles (e.g. clinical, administrative and academic among others).

11. Support ASHP state affiliates and colleges of pharmacy in disseminating and supporting the Women in Pharmacy Leadership recommendations at the school, local, and state level.

#### **Recommendations to Those Seeking Leadership Roles:**

1. Develop a strategic career plan focused on personal skill development, and meet with senior leaders to voice aspirations.
2. Seek applicable education and training (e.g. advanced degrees, residency training, skills based leadership training) to support career trajectory.
3. Recognize that one's career progression is a journey and that each transition entails a new level of commitment and dedication to work-life integration
4. Expand a network of seasoned practitioners both male and female.
5. Identify mentors and sponsors and nurture productive relationships.
6. Be assertive in negotiating, designing, and applying work models that meet the needs of employers as well as individual professional and personal needs for work-personal life balance.

#### **Recommendations to Current Pharmacy Leaders:**

1. For individuals who are in the position of mentoring and sponsoring others, actively identify mentees and nurture those who would benefit from sponsorship, working together to create a personal development plan.
2. Promote key factors that create positive career changes such as advanced degrees and residency training (career inflection points) among mentees.
3. Encourage aspiring leaders to seek and take on visible, important and complex roles and projects.
4. Make introductions of aspiring leaders with other influential leaders.
5. Provide specialized coaching and give feedback.
6. Support the expansion of professional networks of emerging leaders.
7. Share profiles, stories and recommendations of successful female pharmacy leaders with others.

#### **Recommendations to Employer Organizations/Pharmacy Departments:**

1. Actively discuss and cultivate career aspirations of staff.
2. Encourage staff to proactively manage their career plans.
3. Develop mentoring, coaching, and sponsorship programs.
4. Promote active assumption of sponsorship activities to advance aspiring leaders.
5. Identify challenges that prevent aspiring women leaders from pursuing advanced career goals.
6. Create and expand residency programs and other skills-based formal education and training programs, including leadership training, that have been shown to be instrumental in the career success.

7. Examine and consider implementation of organizational policies to provide support to working professionals including flexible hours, job sharing, etc.
8. Offer and/or support educational, training programs and personal development opportunities in order to build success skills of emerging leaders.

### Suggested Readings:

Women in pharmacy leadership. ASHP.

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ASHP steering committee to explore impact of women in the pharmacy workforce. ASHP. <http://www.ashp.org/menu/AboutUs/ForPress/PressReleases/PressRelease.aspx?id=876>

Report of the ASHP Task Force on Pharmacy's Changing Demographics. ASHP.

<http://www.aacp.org/resources/research/pharmacyworkforcecenter/Documents/ASHPTaskForcePharmacysChangingDems2007.pdf>

Academic pharmacy's vital statistics. AACP. <http://www.aacp.org/about/Pages/Vitalstats.aspx>

Gardner SF, Stowe CD. 2006. The impact of a gender shift on a profession: Women in pharmacy. Forum on Public Policy. <http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/archive07/gardner.pharmacy.pdf>

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Barreto M, Ryan MK, Schmitt MT. (2009). Introduction: Is the glass ceiling still relevant in the 21st century? In M. Barreto, M. K. Ryan, & M. T. Schmitt (Eds.), *The glass ceiling in the 21st century* (pp. 153-169). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ryan MK, Haslam S. (2005). The glass cliff: Evidence that women are over-represented in precarious leadership positions. *British Journal of Management*, 16(2), 81-90.

Ibarra H, Carter NM, Silva C. (2010). Why men still get more promotions than women: Your high-potential females need more than just well-meaning mentors. *Harvard Business Review*, September, 80-85.

Catalyst study shows sponsorship is key to women's success. Catalyst.

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