



**Therapeutic Thursdays:  
COVID-19 and Pharmacy Preparedness**  
*Episode Transcription*

Speaker 1 ([00:03](#)):

Welcome to the ASHP Official podcast, your guide to issues related to medication use, public health, and the profession of pharmacy.

Vicki B. ([00:12](#)):

Thank you for joining us for this special edition of COVID-19 this podcast. We'll share the latest information on COVID-19 and chat with our resident expert and review some of the resources ASHP has developed to support members as they navigate patient care. My name is Vicki Basalyga and I will be your host today for the ASHP podcast. With me today is Eric Maroyka, Director of the Center on Pharmacy Practice Advancement, ASHP. Thank you for joining us today. Eric, let's get started talking about today's topic, the outbreak of the coronavirus disease, our COVID-19.

Eric M. ([00:47](#)):

Hey, thanks for allowing me to speak with you today. Vicki, it's great to be here. So, you want me to tell you a little bit about our resource center and you know, how did this come about? I have to hand it to our senior leadership at ASHP for having the foresight to get ahead of this. And really having the idea that sparked the need to start building a resource center. Also, I think our leadership, and this goes back well over a year ago, was for ASHP to be involved with the Healthcare and Public Health Sector Coordinating Council. This is a critical infrastructure industry partner with the government and they coordinate strategic and policy approaches to prepare for disasters, both manmade and natural. And this was a nice segue into being introduced to critical partner resources that I think laid an easy foundation to get this off the ground.

Vicki B. ([01:53](#)):

So, Eric, can you tell us a little bit about the development of the resource center, how it came to be, how you were updating it, how you decided to, what resources?

Eric M. ([02:03](#)):

Yeah, so there is a plethora of resources emerging at local, state and national levels. And, I think we're, we don't have any particular criteria where we screened, but I think we're keeping it to proven, validated resources. We haven't put any state specific resources on here yet, but those are growing and there may be a decision point in which we do include it. But the resource center as it stands now we start out with some ASHP resources that include general guidance for the pharmacy workforce in, emerging or current public health roles at the local and state levels. That was repurposed from a table that was in an ASHP publication. And then we also drew from some published literature back from the SARS outbreak. Really following the same model for that. We also have some free modules that members have access to for competency assessment through that suite of resources.

Eric M. ([03:09](#)):

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We have a link to our Drug Shortages Resource center. What we recently, within the last week, have sent out were policy recommendations for federal and state lawmakers regarding a readiness for COVID-19. Our news resources are growing. And most recently we had one of my colleagues speak on CNBC and you can see that clip in ASHP in the News. We also have a wealth of public and private sector informational resources. Most notably like WHO, CDC, FDA, ASPR (which is the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Readiness). We also have some heat maps that you'll see through the Johns Hopkins Center for Strategic Security and professional associations are rich in resources as well. Some of our medicine, nursing and public health colleagues have nice resources that we've included. And I think most importantly, is if you're not personally prepared, you will be no good to anyone.

Eric M. ([04:20](#)):

And I think just what's woven into my fabric as, as an Eagle Scout and a former Soldier is, is be prepared, and that is, is vital. You need to take care of your people. Those are the most vital resources to keep them personally prepared and also have a staff that's ready and able to work and having your contingency plans in place so that last resource we have under other resources on our page, personal readiness is Ready.gov it's the Ready Campaign. I would encourage you to look at that as well for your own individual preparedness, not just for this particular crisis, but any emergency that may evolve.

Vicki B. ([05:05](#)):

So clearly this is an evolving situation. For example, just today, the WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic, can you let us know what is coming down the line to the resource center that will help our members?

Eric M. ([05:19](#)):

Yes. What we're actively working right now, what we have in place and the you know, by the time this, this podcast of course is published, it'll already have been released, but we're, we're working a survey on personal protective equipment and the cadence for that survey will be approximately every two weeks to get a pulse on what are the supply challenges we're seeing in the field. And you know, just to give you a snapshot of some of the comments for getting back. You know, there's probably four major themes beyond the questions. You know the open, the text field questions, open text, we're getting, you know, concerns about PPE, the drug shortages, staffing concerns for continuity of operations support and recommendations to mitigate and deviate from best practice. Although we would, that would have to be extreme measures, you know, for instance USP <797>.

Eric M. ([06:14](#)):

Also, some of the concerns about media hype and the misinformation that's getting at that, it's causing some hysteria that has been mentioned in, our response from members, and social distancing. Really reinforcing that with mass gatherings. And lastly, as treatments do become available, there is an antiviral, for instance, that's an investigational, it's being tested, but as these are rolled out in the next few months, a vaccine and treatments that they're going to be scarce in their availability initially. And



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there's some concerns about staff security and making sure these are guarded and, and medications and therapeutics that we keep good control on from a chain of custody.

Vicki B. ([07:02](#)):

Eric, you mentioned that we have a diverse number of resources on this resource center. Are there particular areas that you'd like to highlight for those of pharmacy leadership for leadership?

Eric M. ([07:14](#)):

I would say ASHP specific or branded resources would certainly be a great start. Those take into consideration some of the staff preparedness, aspects both in the short, intermediate and long term. One thing I did not mention with your previous question is another thing we're about to launch in the next few days will be a planning checklist for hospital and health-system pharmacies. This will be loosely modeled after a previous pandemic influenza a self-assessment we developed here through the ASHP Foundation. As well as the ASPR has a healthcare planning checklist that we do have posted currently under government agencies on our resource page and that can be found nested under the public health emergency section part of ASPR and that's a pretty comprehensive checklist to, to begin. And it, it's great for leaders to look at that. And then I like I said with my last a bunch of comments was that personal readiness, uh, to look there, but I think any one of these resources that kind of cuts across, there may be something for leaders in each one of these buckets that you can go, but certainly the ASHP resources are probably the place to start first.

Vicki B. ([08:47](#)):

The resource center includes important information for pharmacists on the frontline as well. Those who have direct patient care. Would you like to highlight some of those resources for our clinically minded members?

Eric M. ([08:57](#)):

Yeah, CDC, they update that frequently and it's well referenced. The other area I would like to point out is the American College of Emergency Physicians really has done a nice job with resources. And in some of our other partners - American College of Physicians and we have IDSA. Oh. And, and really our FIP colleagues, they put together very nice information packet on the SARS CoV-2 outbreak preparedness. So that's the name of the virus, but the COVID-19 is the disease, but FIP or actually known as International Pharmaceutical Federation has a nice informational resource in several languages, for our clinicians. Another one that you wouldn't think of is the National Ebola Training and Education Center. There they, that stood up, you know, a few years ago when the Ebola concern was there, but it has a repository of COVID-19 resources that can be repurposed from a policy standpoint or competency. And those are very good. And then of course our critical care colleagues, the Society for Critical Care Medicine has a very good array of resources for acute care settings.

Vicki B. ([10:25](#)):

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So finally, most importantly, we know to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It's important to wash your hands. So my question for you, Eric, is what is your favorite song to wash your hands to?

Eric M. ([10:37](#)):

Yeah, I like to wash my hands for a long time and was in a kind of an upbringing of hard rock. I like to listen to Led Zeppelin's Stairway to Heaven. Some people are puzzled why I'm at the sink for so long, but, but that's, that's what I sing in my head.

Vicki B. ([10:55](#)):

Well, Eric, you're going to be washing your hands for quite a long time there. I personally like to wash my hands to the spice girls spice up your life to make sure I get all of my fingers underneath my fingernails nice and clean. Thank you again for taking time out of your day to talk to us about COVID-19 and to share the resources that ASHP currently has on their website. As a final note, here are some of the items that ASHP has developed or has worked with the media with in the past couple of weeks. First, we would like members to take note that policy recommendations for state and federal policy makers. Ask your legislator to support ACH COVID-19 recommendations and sending an email using the online advocacy center at [advocate.ashp.org](http://advocate.ashp.org). We've also partnered with immediate outlets such as national journal, wired associated press, CNBC, and others who seek ACH expertise.

Vicki B. ([11:49](#)):

If you haven't checked out Mike Ganio interview on MSNBC, you can find the link later on in this podcast to watch that. Finally, on March 16th ASHP is a member of the safe, effective and accessible high quality medicines as a matter of national security. This was a summit that was planned prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 and it will examine the resilience of the U S pharmaceutical supply chain. Thank you for joining us today. I encourage you to check us out and our next podcast where we speak with ASHP, director of pharmacy practice and quality Mike Ganio about the supply chain management. I also want to thank Eric for joining us today to discuss COVID-19.

Speaker 1 ([12:33](#)):

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