

SDCPhA Voice

Newsletter of the San Diego County Pharmacists Association
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California Pharmacists Association

President's Message

By Randy Moore., President SDCPhA

SDCPhA had good representation at CPhA's annual Outlook meeting January 29 to February 1 in Indian Wells, California. Being a larger local association, SDCPhA was able to send six delegates to the House...Jennifer Howard, Victoria

Aldridge, John Johnson, Terry McCarthy, Dieter Steinmetz, and myself. Other SDCPhA members represented in the CPhA House of Delegates included CPhA Board of Trustee delegates Helen Park and Sara Carruth; CPhA academy delegates Bob Graul, Yaofay Lin, Katie Wilkins, and Poonam Patel; UCSD delegates Shadi Vaccani and

Sanam Ansari; and CPhA Past-President delegate Chris Woo. Other San Diegans sighted included John and Cynthia Cronin, Joanna Soltyk, Charles Kakos, Micki and Ron Zeichick, Tracy Moore, Sheila Graul, Matt Ito, Jen and Clinton Testa, Andrew Willis, Jen Prewitt, Ryan Gates, Christine Tanguilig, Christine Yu, Dan Ford, Danielle Mahfood, Lisa Mueller,

Austin Oen, Jerald Limcolioc, Vi Ngo, Ni-Chu Wu, Diane Bao, Su-

san Yee, Lin Duang, Stephanie Moy, Jason Lam, Jamie Annet, Russell Luke, Carissa Brewer, Lawrence Alejandro, Thu Tran, Cecelia Nguyen, and Max Wang.

Helen Park chaired a CPhA Reference Committee, and Dieter



Steinmetz and Dan Ford were Reference Committee members. Moreover, Dieter Steinmetz was successful in introducing a new business item in the CPhA House of Delegates regarding drug pricing by the

manufacturers to be addressed at a later reference committee hearing. Chris Woo received the CPhA Number #1 Club Recruiting Award and was elected as a CPhA delegate to the American Pharmacists Association, and Terry McCarthy ran for CPhA Speaker. UCSD had a strong showing as well, especially considering their rigorous exam schedule.

I was able to attend the annual CPh-PAC meeting and present a \$1000 check from our local chapter

which allowed UCSD student Jason Lam to participate in the "Texas Hold 'Em" poker tournament. This tournament was established to help further fund our legislative interests in Sacramento for the coming year. Peter Kellison, CPhA's full-time lobbyist, clarified the California budget deficits for the ensuing fiscal year and gave us insight as to how the proposed budget might affect the profession of pharmacy. He assured us that Governor Schwarzenegger has no established opinion on drug re-importation. Senator Burton has proposed a bill to legalize re-importation of prescription drugs from Canada for California beneficiaries, similar to legislation in several other states. This bill will be on the governor's desk in the very near future. Whether or not the bill will pass is anyone's guess, but many of the other states do not seem to care if they are breaking federal law. The state has a \$20 billion short-

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Dates to Remember

March 4, 2004

CE Dinner - "Management of Anemia in HIV and HCV Patients & New Drugs for the Treatment of HIV"

Tom Ham's Lighthouse, San Diego, CA
For more information visit www.sdcpha.com

March 6, 2004

Sharp HealthCare Office of CME presents "Community Acquired Pneumonia: And the Winners are Those Who Medicate and Vaccinate"

AMC Fashion Valley Movie Theater, San Diego, CA

For details, visit www.sdcpha.com or call 800-82-SHARP

March 26-30, 2004

APhA Annual Meeting
Seattle, WA

For details, visit www.seeseattle.org.

May 21-24, 2004

Pharmacy CE at Sea - 4.0 hours of CE, Three days aboard the Royal Caribbean Cruise Ship "Monarch of the Seas".

For more information visit www.sdcpha.com or call Celebrity Travel at (800)374-3566

June 19-23, 2004

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists Summer Annual Meeting
Las Vegas, NV

For more info, contact 301-657-3000 or visit www.ashp.org

A current event calendar is available on the San Diego County Pharmacists Association website at www.sdcpha.com.

www.sdcpha.com

Your pharmacy resources on the internet!

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fall and even with the passage of Prop 57 (the bond proposition) we will still be looking at a probable \$10-15 billion deficit for this fiscal year. The first proposed Medi-CAL cut of 10% has been stalled by the courts, but the legislature feels pharmacy is still one of the last providers that Medi-CAL pays higher rates to than private insurers. Legislators do not feel pharmacy is hurting. Their view is there are chain pharmacies on nearly every corner with continued growth across the state, there is a perceived shortage of pharmacists, independent pharmacies are still viable, and wages are high. Retail pharmacy may be in for a 10-20% Medi-CAL cut in the very near future. If there is any time to be active and in contact with local legislators, it is now! Please let SDCPhA Legislative Chair and SDCPhA Board member Ed Meindardus know of your interest.

Associations of all types have had difficulties retaining members in recent years. Perhaps the largest hurdle to jump is finding out what members actually want out of their associations. As you are probably aware, CPhA has decided to embark on a new course, and I think it is imperative that we think about what we want from our local association. What do we want it to represent? It can be social, educational, political, clinical, or purely based on philanthropy and community outreach... or a nice balance of all the above. But it has to be fun. If people aren't enjoying themselves, what do we have? More work? I ask local members of SDCPhA, what would increase your involvement in the association? What do you want from your local pharmacy association? Please do not hesitate to call or email me (858-385-0783, randym_68114@yahoo.com). I would love to hear from members throughout San Diego.

Supermarket Strike and Southern California Pharmacists

by Ed Meindardus, SDCPhA Legislative Affairs Chair

Many Pharmacists employed by the three major grocery chains in our region are over 4 months into a prolonged labor dispute. The most contentious issue in the dispute is the funding of the generous health care previously enjoyed by all employees, Pharmacists and Technicians alike. Estimates of the maintenance of this program is set at \$500.00 per employee per month, not the \$5.00 per week reported in the news. At the start of the strike in October of last year, many of the pharmacies were closed. As of this writing almost all are reopened with limited hours of operation.

Many of the Technicians who have the most to lose with the loss of this benefit (as benefits are factored in to total compensation) have chosen to stay off the job.

Pharmacy customers state that they don't like crossing picket lines, but miss the valuable "Professional" service that their Pharmacy provides. Many felt abandoned, and were quick to point out shortcomings of the alternate Pharmacies they were forced to use. Whether real or imagined, the Profession suffers when such a situation exists. Walgreens has taken out advertisements wooing Supermarket customers by carefully explaining how "easy" it is to transfer prescriptions, but fails to mention the importance of continuity of Total Pharmaceutical Care that many of us offer in the Supermarket arena.

“From The Pharm...” - San Diego Regional Pharmaceutical Narcotic Enforcement Team

The California Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement in conjunction with the San Diego Police Department, has formed a multi-agency task force, known as the San Diego Regional Pharmaceutical Narcotic Enforcement Team (RxNET). RxNET was formed in April 2002, to manage the rise in pharmaceutical diversion related crimes. The purpose of RxNET is to investigate the diversion of legal pharmaceutical drugs to illicit channels, identify and prosecute professionals prescribing medications without meeting acceptable medical standards of care, arrest prescription forgers and “doctor shoppers”, and to identify and prosecute those responsible for the unlawful billing of insurance companies. RxNET also provides a resource for training medical professionals, law enforcement, and the community about the financial and public safety losses that result from pharmaceutical diversion.

RxNET is a cooperative effort of the California Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, the California Department of Justice Triplicate Prescription Program, the San Diego Police Department, the Department of Insurance Fraud Division, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and the San Diego/Imperial County Narcotic Information Network. All investigations are jointly conducted by the participating members, who contribute many types of resources in furtherance of these investigations.

Since RxNET's inception, they have investigated over 600 incidences involving pharmaceutical diversion, arrested over 200 subjects, and identified over \$570,000.00 worth of insurance fraud. Furthermore, 20% of the subjects arrested involve licensed medical professionals, which include medical doctors, certified registered nurses, and pharmacists, to name a few. Because pharmaceutical diversion investigations cross all socioeconomic boundaries, it is common for RxNET to become involved in sen-

sitive investigations involving police officers, teachers, licensed airline pilots, building contractors, and attorney's.

Traditionally, pharmaceutical diversion investigations were cumbersome and complex, often resulting in inconsistent results for both the medical professionals reporting the incidents and law enforcement who were tasked with investigating the crimes. This task force has been resourceful in utilizing the available technology which allows RxNET to network with a larger core group. The San Diego Police Department developed and implemented a program at RxNET, which is specific pharmaceutical diversion, known as the FAX-ALERT system. FAX-ALERT subscribes to approximately 400 Doctors, Pharmacies, and medical clinics throughout San Diego County. This program simultaneously faxes information to the 400 enrolled clients with alert information regarding drug diversion activity. In conjunction with FAX-ALERT, RxNET has been committed to providing an aggressive and dynamic training component. RxNET has provided training at various medical institutions, instructing over 600 Doctors, 300 Registered Nurses, and 100 Pharmacists in identifying diversion trends and characteristics, as well as providing an enforcement resource. In addition, RxNET understands the importance of consistency when investigating pharmaceutical diversion and has provided training to local law enforcement agencies throughout San Diego County.

In the not so distant future, California will be retiring the Triplicate Prescription Program, with the enactment of Senate Bill 151. Certainly, Senate Bill 151, by Senator John Burton, D-San Francisco, California's medical profession will see a more accessible system for monitoring the prescriptions of Schedule II controlled substances and narcotics. Currently, California requires physicians to use triplicate prescription forms when prescribing Schedule II drugs. Those

forms are monitored by the Department of Justice Triplicate Prescription Program. Because of this additional scrutiny of medical professionals licensed to prescribe Schedule II drugs, California has experienced minimal Schedule II abuse. However, California has encountered rampant abuse among Schedule III, IV, and V drugs. The opposite has been seen on the East Coast, where triplicate prescriptions are not utilized. States there have experienced the ravage effects of Schedule II drugs, such as Oxycontin, and fewer problems with Schedule III-V drugs. Some believe that appropriately prescribing Schedule II drugs for pain management will reduce the current abuse trends of Schedule III-V drugs in California.

Under Senate Bill 151, the triplicate prescription program will be phased out and starting January 1, 2005, physicians will be required to use a secure controlled substance prescription form obtained from a printer that has been approved by the Board of Pharmacy. Between July 1, 2004 and the start-up date, physicians will be able to use either the triplicate form or the newer, secure form. Beginning January 1, 2005, the bill will also add Schedule III drugs to the Schedule II drugs that are electronically monitored by the Department of Justice's Controlled Substance Utilization and Review Evaluation System (CURES). This should provide greater control of some of the drugs we are currently seeing abused, such as Vicodin, Tylenol with codeine, and Valium. The development of the “tamper-proof” prescription forms should help curtail the forgery of pharmaceutical prescriptions, in general.

The RxNET Task Force Agents work out of the California Department of Justice building, located at 9425 Chesapeake Drive, San Diego, California. If you would like additional information about RxNET or if we can be of service to your agency, please call the RxNET Hotline at (858) 495-3610.

CPhA Region 8 Trustee Report

by Helen K. Park, PharmD

Outlook 2004 was held January 29-February 1 at the Renaissance Esmeralda Hotel and Spa in the desert oasis of Indian Wells. The meeting commenced with the awards ceremony on Thursday afternoon, and region 8 was recognized with two awards for 2003. The Chapter of Excellence designation replaced what were once the large/small local of the year awards. Local associations were judged in four categories based on activities from the previous year: community service, membership/CPhA participation, social activities, and political functions. The San Diego County Pharmacists Association was one of four local associations to receive this honor. Moreover, S. John Johnson of SDCPhA was the 2003 recipient of the New Practitioner of the year award, which is given to an individual who demonstrates leadership at local, state and/or national levels.

The House of Delegates sessions were not without controversy and debate, as usual. The policies most hotly debated on the floor included drug importation, fair pricing, and technicians. Regarding the issue of drug importation, the House came to an agreement that although accessibility to lower priced medications is an important economic issue, it cannot supersede that of patient safety. Hence, the policy adopted by the House supports federal laws allowing importation of FDA- approved

medications by licensed entities who have demonstrated that they can assure safety and reliability of the imported products. Moreover, the House also agreed to support federal policy that allows importation of moderate amounts of non-FDA approved medications for compassionate use situations.

Related to the drug importation issue was the manufacturer fair pricing policy that addressed equal pricing standards for medications and products available on the international market, hence discouraging disreputable and/or illegal means of importing lesser-priced, but identical, items across borders. The House was almost unanimous in the decision that such a policy is urgently needed considering the current situation of illegal importation and counterfeit medications. The policy was adopted.

The House of Delegates has debated technician issues on numerous occasions in the past, and we revisited them once again. The debates focused around the following: minimum qualifications for technicians, technicians in recovery, and tech-check-tech. A recent change in California pharmacy law no longer allows grandfathering of technicians as in the past. Instead, technicians may either pass the PTCB exam or graduate from an accredited technician program to qualify for licensure. The policy adopted by the House supports all technicians to pass the PTCB exam and graduate from

an accredited technician program and be registered with the California Board of Pharmacy. This decision was based on the fact that either qualification alone does not provide enough education/knowledge for a technician, and since the role of the technician is becoming more com-

plicated, the level of competency for technicians must similarly increase. The House also decided that technicians who are in a recovery program or who can provide evidence of rehabilitation following drug-related crimes should be considered for employment, much like the pharmacist recovery program participants.

Lastly, tech-check-tech was discussed in reference to liability and quality assurance. The House agreed that although tech-check-tech programs were invaluable and successful in hospital settings, involving negligible errors, responsibility and liability of such programs should not rest solely on the institution and the pharmacist-in-charge but should also rest on the technicians involved. The House also agreed that an assurance of continuous quality improvement was needed and that a verifiable system must be implemented for ongoing monitoring and documentation of technician performance. The standing policy on technicians was amended to include all of the above.

If you have any comments or questions regarding activities in your local association and those in Region 8, please do not hesitate to contact me at hpark47@yahoo.com. As your Region 8 Trustee, I welcome your input.



Chapter of Excellence - SDCPhA at Outlook 2004



Randy Moore gives SDCPhA's contribution to CPhA-PAC board member Sylvia Moore at Outlook.

San Diego County Pharmacists Association at Outlook 2004



Left: John Johnson accepts the Distinguished New Practitioner award. Below: Katie Wilkins, Randy Moore, former San Diegan David Mitchell and Dieter Steinmetz explore the Exhibit Hall. Right: Reference Committee members Dieter Steinmetz, Helen Park and Dan Ford. Lower Right: The VASD connection - Victoria Aldridge, Matt Ito, Jennifer Howard and Poonam Patel.



Above: Jason Lam and John Cronin both were players in the CPh-PAC Texas Hold 'Em fundraiser at Outlook 2004. Below: CPhA Awards Committee Chair Bob Nickell, John Johnson.

Above: Bob Graul, Katie Wilkins, CPhA Associate V.P. of Clinical Affairs Mike Negrete, Shadi Vaccani and Terry McCarthy. Above Right: Goofing around with Jen Prewitt, Andrew Willis, Clinton and Jen Testa. Below Right: John Johnson, Christine Tanguilig and Chris Woo.



Above: Poonam Patel and Ron Zeichick. Right: Dan Ford, 2003 CPhA President Debby Johnson and Danielle Mahfood.



SDCPhA Pharmacist of the Year

By Poonam Patel, Pharm.D., MBA

Helen K. Park, PharmD was named Pharmacist of the Year by San Diego County Pharmacists Association for the year 2003. Helen has served as the President of this Association for the past two years and has been instrumental in getting this Association the recognition it currently has. Helen is currently working as the Spinal Cord Injury Pharmacist at the VA San Diego Healthcare System. In addition to her activities at the local level, Helen was recently elected as the Region 8 Trustee for CPhA. We are very pleased that not only San Diego county, but other counties in Region 8 such as Imperial Valley and Inland Empire are being represented by her and her leadership. During her spare time she serves on multiple SDCPhA committees and represents SDCPhA on the San Diego County RxERT Board as well as the San Diego County Health Professionals Alliance. Congratulations to Helen on this well deserved, and well overdue recognition.



Top: Gene Tunick presents award to Helen Park.
Above: Helen Park, 2003 CPhA President Debbie Johnson, and Denise Woo

Winter Update: Student Life at UCSD

by Jason Lam, second year student

This year's excitement at UCSD School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (SPPS) was marked by the positive interaction between the first and second year pharmacy students. Within the busy curriculum of each class, all students made a great effort to establish unity and support through professional and social events. This unity was strengthened when twenty students traveled to sunny Palm Desert for the CPhA Outlook 2004 convention.

SPPS Student Life

Though the two classes are taking classes at different locations on the UCSD campus, the first and second year students have found time within their packed schedules to meet with one another and talk about everything from the field of pharmacy to student life. "There has always good interaction between the two years under the given circumstances, since the second years are over at the medical school. Still, the second years are like big brothers and sisters to us, and have always treated us well," said first year student pharmacist Austen Oen. The first year students are continuing to help hone the first year pharmacy school curriculum.

The second year students are continuing their combined curriculum with the UCSD School of Medicine (SOM). During this time, the students do not have the same degree of interaction with the SPPS faculty. Second year student pharmacist Doan Nguyen said, "We don't have a building yet for classes, so there is a bit of disconnection with the School of Pharmacy. But you can also look at the bright side. We have the opportunity to have more interaction with the medical students, and it will be easier for us later on, when we are working together and sharing the same knowledge." By using this opportunity to make their mark at the SOM, the second years can ease the transition for future pharmacy students.

Amidst the successes and challenges that the future pharmacists experience, interclass support and communication remains a major priority and focus. Second year student pharmacist Lisa Mueller said, "As the first class entering the school of pharmacy, it is very important for us to have a strong sense of unity. We are constantly entering uncharted ground, which can feel like an unbearable amount of responsibility at times. As the charter class, we can be there to reassure those following in our footsteps."

Weekend at Palm Desert

Outlook 2004 was a precious opportunity for the UCSD student pharmacists not only to intermingle with one another, but also have a chance to meet students from other California schools of pharmacy. When asked to comment on the networking aspect of Outlook, Oen said, "It was a great experience as a first year student to go to Outlook. It was the first time I was able to go out and meet a lot of students and pharmacists. It is great to know that there is such a community out there."

The students were also exposed to key legislative issues that affect CPhA and the field of pharmacy. Student pharmacist Sanam Ansari said, "It has truly been a valuable experience to serve as a delegate and have a say in CPhA's stance on various important issues, such as drug reimportation and tech-check-tech programs." All students participated in the numerous continuing education classes, delegate meetings, as well as social events such as Monte Carlo night.



UCSD Poster Project - Diane Bao, Lisa Mueller, Jason Lam, Sanam Ansari and Susan Yee.

Local CPhA Academy Board Members and Contact Information

CPhA provides its members additional membership and representation in practice-specific academies. Each academy has a board whose purposes are to examine issues specific to their academy practice and make recommendations for CPhA policy; to educate its membership about practice-specific issues; and to provide additional guidance to CPhA staff. Academy board members are volunteers, but they play an important role in CPhA policy and public perception of their specific pharmacy practice settings.

SDCPhA has many members who are serving as academy board members. If you have any questions or comments for them, please contact them directly. There are a number of academies that do not have board representation by SDCPhA members, and there is no rule that limits each board to only one local representative. If you are interested in finding out more about academies or running for an academy board position, please contact CPhA at (800)444-3851.

Academy of Pharmacy Owners

The mission of the academy of pharmacy owners is to actively promote positive health outcomes through drug therapy by pharmacist care and improve the financial prosperity of the independent community pharmacist.

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Academy of Hospital Pharmacists

The mission of the Academy of Hospital Pharmacists is to promote awareness of hospital pharmacy practice and enhance communication to membership of the opportunities and challenges in the hospital setting.



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Academy of Pharmacy Technicians

The mission of the Academy of Pharmacy Technicians is to inspire optimal levels of professionalism and job satisfaction, and to establish mechanisms specifically targeted at recruitment and retention of its' members.



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Academy of Long Term Care

It is the mission of the Academy of Long Term Care to promote pharmacy practice in the long-term care setting by enhancing the quality of practice through education and establishment of professional and ethical standards.

Academy of New Practitioners

The mission of the Academy of New Practitioners is to identify specialized needs of New Practitioners and develop services, programs and activities that will advance their interests; serve as an informational resource for the Academy and the entire association; provide forums where the unique problems and interests of New Practitioners can be discussed; and to establish mechanisms specifically targeted at the retention of student members as they transition into new practitioners.

Academy of Employee Pharmacists

The mission of AEP is to support employee pharmacists in the management of their practice environment, ensuring job satisfaction and expanding the professional role of the employee pharmacist in the delivery of pharmacy services.

Academy of Pharmacy Specialties

The Academy of Pharmacy Specialties (APS) Board provides pharmacists who practice in specialty areas with opportunities for networking and representation in the CPhA policymaking process. Members of the Academy of Pharmacy Specialties strive to provide CPhA with specialized resources for educational programming, development of policies and achievement of optimal patient outcomes. APS members work in a variety of settings, including managed care, academia, law, government and industry.

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San Diego County Pharmacists Association



San Diego Pharmacists and Students at Outlook 2004

Left: *Refueling in the Exhibit Hall - From left to right, Poonam Patel, Victoria Aldridge, Helen Park, Jennifer Howard and Randy Moore.* Below: *UCSD Poster Project - Sara Carruth, Sanam Ansari, Shadi Vaccani, Dan Ford, Jethmark Oales and Austen Oen.*

