



# MONTANA PHARMACY TODAY

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## MONTANA PHARMACY ASSOCIATION NEW CHAIR - JASON NICKISCH



The Montana Pharmacy Association officially selected pharmacist Jason Nickisch as the association's new Chair during their Annual Business Meeting on June 1st. He is currently the Director of Pharmacy, Respiratory, and Electrocardiography Services for Providence Health & Services – Montana, which includes both Providence St. Patrick and St. Joseph Hospitals.

Jason has been on the Montana Pharmacy Association (MPA) Board of Directors since his election in 2016 and has served on the association's Health Systems Academy as well on the Legislative and Membership Committees.

Jason graduated from the University of Montana - Skaggs School of Pharmacy with his Pharm.D. degree in 2002 and the University of Montana - School of Business Administration with his MBA in 2015. He completed a pediatric specialty residency at The Children's Hospital in Denver, Colorado.

Following completion of his residency, Jason established a Women's & Children's pharmacy position at Benefis Health System in Great Falls where he worked for 8 years. During his tenure at Benefis Health System, he established their PGY-1 pharmacy residency program as their initial Residency Program Director and received his Board Certification in Pharmacotherapy. After leaving Great Falls, he moved to Odessa, TX where he spent 2 years as the Assistant Director of Pharmacy at Medical Center Health System.

He then moved back to Missoula to become the Clinical Manager and Residency Program Director at Providence St. Patrick Hospital.

### WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS KORI MILLER, TRAVIS SCHULE AND ALISHA TAYLOR

At this year's annual MPA meeting the membership also announced the selection and seating of three new board members. They include Kori Miller, Albertsons Division Manager of Patient Care Services in Billings, Travis Schule, a pharmacist co-owner & operator at Sykes Drug in Kalispell and Alisha Taylor, a P2 who is our new MPA Student Representative on the board. She joins Jen Daly who is entering her second year as a student member on the MPA board.



### In This Issue:

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## DYNAMIC PROGRAMS AT THIS YEAR'S 2019 NW CONVENTION

Participants who attended had the chance to attend unique seminars and the opportunity to receive 15 ACPE credits. Programming at the meeting was directed to pharmacists and technicians practicing in various healthcare settings, including

independently owned, hospital, chain drugstores, long-term care and academia. Participants who attended had the chance to attend a year of unique seminars and the opportunity to receive 15 ACPE credits. The 2020 NW Convention will be held May 28-31, 2020.

## MPA JOINS PHARMACY STAKEHOLDER LETTER TO KEY US SENATORS REQUESTING FEDERAL ACTION ON DIR FEES – LETTER BELOW

### DEAR CHAIRMAN GRASSLEY AND RANKING MEMBER WYDEN:

As pharmacists, pharmacy stakeholder groups, and patient advocacy organizations representing the interests of Medicare Part D beneficiaries, we are writing today to urge you to include pharmacy DIR fee reform, in the Senate Finance Committee's drug pricing legislation.

As you know, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently missed an opportunity to deliver real cost savings to Medicare beneficiaries when the agency finalized the Modernizing Part D and Medicare Advantage to Lower Drug Prices and Reduce Out-of-Pocket Expenses, CMS-4180-P rule without retaining crucial pharmacy DIR fee reforms that had been proposed. Without pharmacy DIR fee reform, another year could pass before seniors see drug prices lowered at the pharmacy counter.

As CMS itself cited in the proposed rule, DIR fees on pharmacies participating in Part D grew by 45,000 percent between 2010 and

2017. This increase is unacceptable and unsustainable, and it creates uncertainty not only for community pharmacies but also for the patients who rely on Part D prescription drugs. Until pharmacy DIR fee reform occurs, seniors will continue to pay higher cost-sharing for their prescription drugs. CMS estimated that these reforms would have saved Medicare beneficiaries between \$7.1 and \$9.2 billion in cost sharing over the next ten years.

CMS has studied this issue extensively and heard from thousands of pharmacists and patient advocates during the comment period as well as 29 members of the United States Senate and 62 members of the House of Representatives encouraging finalization of the pharmacy DIR provisions.

If CMS will not act, then Congress must. For these reasons, we continue to urge the Senate Finance Committee, with your leadership, to deliver seniors real relief from rising prescription drug costs. We stand ready to work with you to determine how we can adopt this much needed and overdue reform relief this year.



### WELCOME NEW MPA ASSOCIATION COORDINATOR – DEEDEE GRUBBS

Deedee Grubbs of Helena has been hired to serve as the new Association Coordinator for MPA. She is training with Suzanne Morgan, who will continue to work on MPA projects and help with the transition.

Deedee and her husband

David moved back to Helena from Billings to be closer to family. Deedee was the Library Manager, Community Education Director and Event Coordinator for Blue Creek School in Billings for 15 years. She has a son, a daughter and new son-in-law. She enjoys reading, traveling, and hanging out with family and friends.

Her attention to detail and positive references will be a plus as she works with Stuart Doggett in providing association management services for MPA. Please welcome Deedee Grubbs to the team! She can be reached by e-mail at [dgrubbs@montana.com](mailto:dgrubbs@montana.com).

**facebook**

### MONTANA PHARMACY ASSOCIATION LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

The Montana Pharmacy Association has a Facebook page, available through the Association's website at [www.rxmt.org](http://www.rxmt.org). This MPA feature serves as a popular and easy way for members and anyone interested in Montana pharmacy related issues to stay connected. We hope you will join us!

## PHARMACY TECHNICIAN SPOTLIGHT: BECKY CHEZUM, CERTIFIED PHARMACY TECHNICIAN, HOLY ROSARY HEALTHCARE

### WHERE DO YOU WORK AND WHAT IS YOUR POSITION?

I work for Holy Rosary Healthcare (HRH) in Miles City, MT as a CPhT, 340b coordinator, and pharmacy buyer.

### WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO PURSUE A CAREER AS A PHARMACY TECHNICIAN? WHY DID YOU BECOME CERTIFIED?

It was really a fluke. I was working in Admissions. I went to college for business and marketing and my thought was I would move up in patient accounts and become a manager in those areas. The pharmacy manager came and recruited me and offered to do on the job training. This changed the direction of my career. I accepted the offer and went to work for Jim; he got me the books for pharmacy technician certification through the University of Missoula. The other technician who was already employed also wasn't certified, so we studied and took the test on the same day.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT BEING AN MPA MEMBER?

Networking and I really enjoy keeping up to date on the legislative information.

### LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?

I have sought out opportunities for growth and SCL has provided me the opportunity to travel all over the country for

projects I have been on. Most recently, I received the APEXUS Advanced Operations certificate through 340b. To acquire this certificate, there were modules I had to take and at the end of the modules, I had to take and pass a test. I was one of the first employees in our organization to obtain this advanced certificate. I also assisted and was a point person in for the HRH pharmacy design along with the pharmacy director. Redesigning a pharmacy is quite an undertaking and finishing this was an accomplishment.

### PASSION OUTSIDE OF WORK?

I am a caretaker. I always try to do the right thing for people. I care about people and I really do enjoy taking care of people (especially my husband and children), the animals on my farm, and spending time in my garden. I have 3 y/o granddaughter who is the light of my life and I love being able to spend time with her. I love my animals. I like to camp. Most of all, I really just enjoy being outside.

### ADVICE TO OTHER PHARMACY TECHNICIANS?

If you want to learn, there are ways to grow. If you have positive attitude and a good work ethic, there is a ton of growth in this field.



## MPA STUDENT UPDATE

by Alisha Taylor

This past year UM students have been active, eager and constantly seeking more ways to be involved in activities outside the classroom. Individuals have taken their passions to accomplish some incredible feats. Below highlights some of the few (emphasis on few) of the amazing projects executed by some motivated students:

- Primarily through organizing a community 5K Fun Run/Walk, students set a goal to raise enough money to send 20 children with asthma to Camp Huff 'N Puff this summer. Many students will also be volunteering their time on location during the week long camp in July.
- Students lead a Feminine Hygiene Products and Personal Care Items Drive to gather donations for the Missoula Food Bank. After some friendly class/faculty competition over 3000 products were collected and delivered for the cause!

- Groups of students were invited into the classrooms of local primary education schools to present on topics ranging from medication vs. candy identification to the dangers of mixing prescription drugs with recreational. These lectures were given in a way that proved both interactive and educational. Presenters were sure to emphasize that pharmacists are readily available if medication questions ever arise.
- Keeping the community current on suggested immunizations has remained a top priority for students this last year. Teams reached out to companies and organizations to offer influenza vaccine clinics throughout the fall. Other groups of students traveled to Helena to show support for HB231 during this past legislative session and even testified to the training interns receive prior to performing immunizations.

We are all looking forward to another year full of ambitious students!



## MPA HEALTH-SYSTEMS ACADEMY UPDATES

by Amanda Patel

### SPRING SEMINAR:

Over sixty pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, residents and pharmacy students attended the 6th annual MPA Spring Seminar in Billings and Missoula. Pharmacy residents from across the state presented the results of their year-long projects in preparation for the Mountain States and Northwest Residency Conferences held in Salt Lake City and Portland. Attendees also had the opportunity to hear presentations on establishing payment for patient care services, anticoagulation reversal, antimicrobial stewardship and building support systems for second victims.

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for the 7th annual Spring Seminar scheduled for April 17th and 18th, 2020, at the University of Montana in Missoula and the Billings Clinic.

### MONTANA REPRESENTATIVES ATTEND THE ASHP HOUSE OF DELEGATES:



Jason Nickisch and Jeff Ferber represented their Montana constituents in the ASHP House of Delegates which met in Boston during the ASHP Summer Meeting. The House of Delegates serves as the ultimate authority on ASHP policies

which reflect the organization's professional stance on topics that effect pharmacy and safe medication use.

The MPA Health-Systems Academy will hold the next election for one alternate delegate this fall. The newly elected delegate will serve a three-year term starting in the alternate position, transitioning into the junior delegate role the second year and the senior delegate role the third year. Any pharmacist licensed in Montana with an active ASHP membership is eligible for this election. If you are interested, please look for the call for nominations in November.

### HEALTH-SYSTEMS ACADEMY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Elizabeth Klein, PharmD, PGY-1 resident at Billings Clinic, will complete her term as resident member on the Executive Committee in July. We would like to thank her for all her work and participation on the Executive Committee and wish her well on her next professional endeavor!

The Executive Committee will be reaching out to the Montana residency program directors to help identify the next resident representative.

Questions, comments or concerns about the MPA Health-Systems Academy? Please contact: Stuart Doggett, MPA Executive Director ([stuart@montana.com](mailto:stuart@montana.com)), Logan Tinsen, MPA Health-Systems Academy Chair ([LoganTinsen@benefis.org](mailto:LoganTinsen@benefis.org))

## QUICK HITS

### WHAT'S UP WITH PRICES?

In case you were curious, drug makers raised the list prices of their meds by an average of 2.9% in the first quarter of the year, according to analysis by GoodRx. The U.S. annualized inflation rate is about 1.6%.

They raised the price of some drugs, including Cosentyx, Daytrana, and Xtampza ER almost 10 percent.

As the report put it:

"The large number of drugs that increased in price by over 9.0% is not a coincidence. As the conversation regarding drug prices has heated up over the past couple of years,

manufacturers have slowly taken a pledge to keep price increases below 10% annually—but they continue to push the limit and raise prices by 9.9%."

The average covers both generics and name-brand meds.

### OPIOID USE DROPPING

So says a report from the IQVIA Institute for Human Data Science—in fact, it fell at a record rate: Down 17% in 2018, "marking the largest annual decline ever recorded."

Even better, in 2011 enough prescription opioids were dispensed to give 72 pills to every U.S. adult. But in 2018 there were only 34 pills dispensed per adult.



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## PTCB DEVELOPING ADVANCED CPhT CREDENTIAL

by Laura Humphrey

### FIVE NEW ADVANCED ASSESSMENT-BASED CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS WILL PRECEDE ROLLOUT

The Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB), the nation's leading certifying body for pharmacy technicians, will expand its credentialing programs by adding five assessment-based certificate programs for advanced technician roles, and an Advanced Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT-Adv) credential. The new assessment-based certificate programs will recognize the important contributions pharmacy technicians make to advance medication safety. Candidates seeking to be a CPhT-Adv will be required to have earned at least four of the new certificates to be eligible.

The five certificate programs under development are:

- Technician Product Verification (Tech-Check-Tech)
- Medication History
- Controlled Substance Diversion Prevention
- Billing and Reimbursement
- Hazardous Drug Management

Candidates must hold an active PTCB CPhT certification and complete a PTCB-recognized education/training program to be eligible to apply for the certificate programs. Current PTCB CPhTs who have completed at least four of the certificate programs and 3 years of work experience will be eligible to earn a CPhT-Adv as early as mid-2020.

Experts, including PTCB staff, pharmacists, technician educators, and CPhTs are developing the assessment-based certificate programs, beginning with the Technician Product Verification (Tech-Check-Tech) and Medication History programs, which are expected to be available later this year.

CPhTs who earn the CPhT-Adv credential will be required to complete specific continuing education and renew on a regular basis to maintain its active status. PTCB currently offers two certification programs: the Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT) offered since 1995, and the Compounded Sterile Preparation Technician (CSPT™) launched in 2017. Assessment-based certificate programs will be a new type of PTCB credential with different requirements from certification programs.

## AN APP TO DIAGNOSE EAR INFECTIONS

Nifty trick - researchers at the University of Washington, Seattle have created a smartphone app that can diagnose ear infections more accurately than a physician with an otoscope - 85 percent for the app vs. 51 percent for the otoscope.

It's simple: The app (via a small paper funnel) essentially uses sonar to listen to the inside of the ear to detect fluid. Fluid = infection.



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## INCREASING ACCESS TO CLINICAL PHARMACY SERVICES IN MONTANA

by Carla Cobb, PharmD, BCPP for the Montana Pharmacist Patient Care Alliance (MPPCA)

Payment for patient care services provided by clinical pharmacist practitioners (CPPs) in Montana is taking off. The number of CPPs in Montana has almost tripled, to 34 at last count. The number of unique Medicaid patients served has risen from 175 in the first year of the program to 252 as of April 2019 with the number of encounters increasing from 235 to 351. Through April 2019 Medicaid has paid out \$60,358 in claims.

During the program implementation Medicaid also tracked adherence measures. The percentage of patients with 80% or more of "Proportion of Days Covered" during the 9 months pre & post CPP program implementation showed an overall trend toward improvement from 60% to 76%. The biggest impact on improving adherence was noted for patients with diabetes and hypertension. This trend is not surprising but because there were a small number of CPP patients enrolled in Medicaid for the entire 18 month period, the outcome was not statistically significant.

Although the numbers are still small, they are encouraging. Most importantly, more patients now have access to clinical pharmacy services than ever before.

Here are a few things that you can do to help ensure that all patients who can benefit have access to CPP services.

1. Check eligibility requirements for board certification by the Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS), an important step in becoming a CPP.
2. Review "The Patient Care Process for Delivering Comprehensive Medication Management". This document outlines a consistent, evidence-based process that helps distinguish the role of pharmacists from other members of the healthcare team.
3. Work closely with your credentialing and billing departments to enroll CPPs in insurance plans, know what services are covered, and understand essential documentation.
4. Learn and provide as much information as possible to your billing department. Since processing pharmacy claims may not be a top priority for large health systems, it's important to Understanding Health Care Billing Basics. A recent article from Pharmacy Today in 2017 provides an excellent primer about billing but it must also be accompanied by state level specifics and updated information as CMS payment rules change every year.

Please join MPPCA at our fall meeting on Friday, November 8th at the Great Northern Hotel in Helena to exchange ideas with leading experts about how we can continue to advance pharmacy practice. We are planning several panels including a director of pharmacy panel, a payer panel, and a community pharmacy panel. Watch for the agenda coming soon on the Montana Pharmacy Association website.





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**Executive Director:** Marcie Bough, PharmD  
[mbough@mt.gov](mailto:mbough@mt.gov)

### Calendar of Events

**July 1:** Nominations open for MPA Annual Awards:  
Form available at [www.rxmt.org/annual-awards.org](http://www.rxmt.org/annual-awards.org)

**September 18:** Student / MPA Meet and Greet,  
Missoula

**September 19:** MPA Board of Directors Meeting,  
Missoula

**October 15:** Nominations close for MPA Annual  
Awards

**January 10:** MPA Annual Awards and Longevity  
Recognitions at the MPA Banquet.

### 2020 Continuing Education Offerings

#### **MPA Winter CE & Ski Meeting**

January 10-12, 2020 – Big Sky, MT

#### **Health-System Academy Spring Seminar (video conference)**

April 17-18, 2020 – Billings and Missoula, MT

#### **Northwest Pharmacy Conference**

May 28-31, 2020 – Coeur d'Alene, ID