

Teach and Be Taught

Shallen Letwin

I recently attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the British Columbia Branch of CSHP. I was extremely pleased to connect with many colleagues both to discuss the current challenges and successes of hospital pharmacy practice and to just catch up!

This year's AGM was special for me in several respects. For one, as national President Elect of CSHP, I was invited to say a few words to an audience in my home town. I also learned about a new initiative that was started this year, the Future Hospital Pharmacists Student Sponsorship Program. Through this program, the BC Residency Committee reserved and paid for 20 AGM registrations for pharmacy students interested in hospital practice. When I heard about the program, I thought, "What a great idea!"

Earlier in the day, I gave a lecture on communicating with physicians to the second-year pharmacy class at the University of British Columbia, and, to my delight, some of those students were in attendance at the AGM. Several of them approached me and said, "We really enjoyed your lecture, Dr Letwin, and we learned a lot!" I was glad to share my experiences with these budding hospital pharmacists.

During the evening social function, the students and I discussed the role of the hospital pharmacist, current hospital pharmacy opportunities, and students' experiences in the hospital setting. The passion that these students bring to providing direct patient care and using their knowledge to identify and resolve drug-related problems is infectious!

As I listened intently to what the students were saying, I learned that one of their main reasons for pursuing hospital pharmacy practice is the high-standard, professional patient care environment found in most hospital pharmacy departments. This seems to be

a main driver for their career path. Although the need for hospital pharmacists' salaries to be competitive is still a concern, being given the opportunity to provide clinical patient care is definitely non-negotiable when students are considering a career with a potential employer.

At the end of the day, I was grateful to have been able to teach something to the students about the role of hospital pharmacists and to have been taught by the students the key conditions that are required to attract them to hospital pharmacy.

A patient-focused care environment . . . create it, and they will come!



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