



# PHARMASCRIP

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### Pharmascript Submissions

Submit articles for publication in the Winter edition of Pharmascript by February 15, 2022.

Submit articles for publication in the Spring edition of Pharmascript by May 15, 2022.

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*The views expressed by contributing authors do not necessarily reflect those of MSHP or the affiliated institutions of MSHP unless otherwise stated.*

## Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee 2021 Infectious Disease Program Recap

Chelsea Huang, PharmD, BCIDP  
Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee Chair

The 9th Annual Infectious Disease (ID) Continuing Education (CE) program provided continuing education activities in two hot topics in antimicrobial stewardship. The first half of the program, “Augmentin' your allergy program: Antibiotic allergy evaluation and testing initiatives”, was kicked off by Dr. Kendall Tucker who provided an overview of penicillin allergies and focused on strategies to evaluate Type I penicillin allergy. Less than 10% of patients who report an allergy are truly allergic upon formal evaluation, highlighting the importance of evaluating penicillin allergies.<sup>1</sup> Evaluation strategies reviewed included penicillin skin testing and graded oral challenge. Dr. Young Yoon Ham followed Dr. Tucker's overview and described the allergy evaluation protocol at Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU).

Dr. Ham reviewed the protocol at OSHU that starts with a standardized patient interview and includes an algorithm to determine if the patient should undergo penicillin skin testing or graded oral challenge. She presented data from their pilot program that had removed penicillin allergy flags from 96% of patients evaluated. The pilot program also found that the majority of patients had their penicillin allergy removed after graded oral challenge or interview alone.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ham wrapped up the first half of the program with a few program pearls, touching on the importance of standardized interviews and patient education to prevent relabeling.

The second half of the ID CE program was presented by Dr. Stephanie Pires who presented “What's the diff on C. diff? A Review of the 2021 Focused Update Guidelines and its Impact on Stewardship”. Dr. Pires explained the GRADE Approach used to evaluate the evidence and reviewed the evidence to support the three new recommendations within this focused update guideline. The focused update guideline suggested using fidaxomicin rather than a standard course of vancomycin in both initial and recurrent *Clostridioides difficile* infection.<sup>3</sup> The studies used for these recommendations found the outcome of sustained response to favor fidaxomicin over standard course of vancomycin, with other outcomes such as initial cure to be similar.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Pires further summarized a few pharmacoeconomic studies, highlighting that cost-effectiveness of fidaxomicin may not be seen across all disease severity or subpopulations and nonfinancial benefits of reducing recurrences should be considered.

The MSHP Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee would like to thank our speakers, Dr. Tucker, Dr. Ham, and Dr. Pires, as well as the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy Office of Continuing Education and MSHP staff for their help with the ID CE Program.

### References:

1. Shenoy ES, Macy E, Rowe T, Blumenthal KG. Evaluation and management of penicillin allergy: a review. JAMA. 2019;321(2):188.
2. Ham Y, Sukerman ES, Lewis JS, Tucker KJ, Yu DL, Joshi SR. Safety and efficacy of direct two-step penicillin challenges with an inpatient pharmacist-driven allergy evaluation. allergy asthma proc. 2021;42(2):153-159.
3. Johnson S, Lavergne V, Skinner AM, et al. Clinical practice guideline by the infectious diseases society of america (Idsa) and society for healthcare epidemiology of america (Shea): 2021 focused update guidelines on management of clostridioides difficile infection in adults. Clinical Infectious Diseases. 2021;73(5):e1029-e1044.

## Educational Programs Committee

Ann Zhou, PharmD, BCPS

Educational Programs Committee Chair

Catherine Burdalski Rinaldi, PharmD, BCOP, NCTTP

Educational Programs Committee Chair-Elect

**The MSHP Fall Seminar was a major success!** The seminar was delivered for the very first time in the hybrid format, occurring onsite at the Hotel at Arundel Preserve and live-streamed for virtual attendees. The Educational Programs Committee alongside the MSHP Board were pleased at the turnout and active participation of the organization's members.

The Fall Seminar 2021 provided education on the management of status epilepticus, the pharmacist's vital role in management of substance use disorder and opioid stewardship, embracing our diversity in the pharmacy workplace, strategies for employee engagement and retention, transitions of care, and preceptor development to over eighty-five attendees while also providing the annual MSHP member business meeting.

**The MSHP Educational Programs Committee would love to hear from you!** Here are ways you can get involved:

- Submit ideas that you'd like to see educational presentations on here: <https://forms.gle/YVj2it5nZe1wmHFJ8>
- Submit your interest in being a speaker (with or without a topic) here: <https://forms.gle/g3EiStD44aSj5aDg8>
- To volunteer or gather more information about volunteering with the Educational Programs Committee please email [Ann Zhou](#) or [Kate Burdalski](#).



*Dr. Nephthalee Edmond and Dr. Ifeanyi Egbunike-Chukwuma present Addressing the Elephant in the Room: Embracing our Diversity in the Pharmacy Workplace.*



*MSHP 2021 Preceptor of the Year awardee Dr. Julie Waldfogel presents Thinking about Thinking: Metacognition and Clinical Reasoning.*

The 2022 Spring Seminar will take place on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at The Hotel at Ann Arundel Preserve in Hanover, Maryland. All programming will be hosted live onsite and streamed live for virtual participation. All CE programming is approved for both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. New this year: member pharmacy technicians attend for free either online or in person. Please refer to the [MSHP Events Page](#) for more details.

The 2022 Research Seminar will take place virtually on Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Abstract submissions for our 2022 Research Seminar are open to all MSHP members, including pharmacy technicians, pharmacists, residents, and students. The submission deadline is February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11:59 pm. [Click Here](#) for more details and to submit your abstract!

## Legislative Committee

### Recent Maryland Legislation Aims to Improve Health Disparities

Gina Bazemore, PharmD, MBA, BCPS  
Clinical Director of Pharmacy Operations, Innovative Delivery Solutions  
Legislative Committee Chair

In the spring of 2021, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act. Born in Jamaica, Shirley Nathan-Pulliam studied nursing at the University of Maryland at Baltimore and earned a master's degree in administration from the Johns Hopkins University. She was elected to the senate in 1994 and is well known for health care advocacy.<sup>1</sup> While she retired in 2019, her legacy lives on in the Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act.

Passing the Health Equity Act established the Maryland Commission on Health Equity whose main charge is to develop a health equity framework to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities in Maryland. Specifically, the commission was organized to “advise on issues of racial, ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic health disparities; and to develop a comprehensive health equity plan addressing the social determinants of health”. Ultimately the commission will “set goals for health equity and prepare a plan for achieving health equity in alignment with other statewide planning activities”.<sup>2</sup>

Data consistently show health disparities in Maryland, with racial and ethnic minorities more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of social determinants of health including access to health care, education, employment, economic stability, and other environmental factors. For example, while Black individuals comprise 29.8% of the Maryland population, as of Nov 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, they represent 31% of positive COVID-19 cases and 35% of mortality.<sup>3</sup> Maryland's maternal mortality and infant mortality rates among Black non-Hispanics are 3.7 and 2.5 times higher than the White non-Hispanic population, respectively. Furthermore, there are significant differences in the incidence of HIV, as well as emergency room visits for asthma, diabetes, hypertension, and substance use between these ethnicities.<sup>4</sup>

As the Maryland Commission on Health Equity forms to develop the framework, pharmacists too are working to improve the health care landscape. Seferina Kim, a member of the Legislative Committee, has been networking with Dr. Noel Brathwaite, the Director of Minority Health and Health Disparities at the Maryland Department of Health. Together they have invited the MSHP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force co-chairs to explore opportunities for partnership and grant funding. If you are interested in learning more about this exciting legislation, or wish to join the Legislative Committee, please reach out to [Seferina Kim](#), [Brian Cotter](#), or [Gina Bazemore](#).

#### References:

1. Maryland Manual Online: A Guide to Maryland and its Government. Maryland State Archives. August 4, 2021. Accessed November 16, 2021. <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/05sen/former/html/msa12283.html>
2. Public Health – Maryland Commission on Health Equity (The Shirley Nathan–Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021). Fiscal and Policy Note Senate Bill 52. Maryland General Assembly May 30, 2021. Accessed November 16, 2021. [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/Chapters\\_noln/CH\\_750\\_sb0052e.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/Chapters_noln/CH_750_sb0052e.pdf)
3. Maryland COVID-19 Data Dashboard. Maryland Department of Health. November 12, 2021. Accessed November 16, 2021. <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>
4. Public Health – Maryland Commission on Health Equity (The Shirley Nathan–Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021). Article II, Section 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution - Chapter 750. Maryland General Assembly May 30, 2021. Accessed November 16, 2021. [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/fnotes/bil\\_0002/sb0052.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/fnotes/bil_0002/sb0052.pdf)



## Pharmacy Technician's Role in Transplant Patient Care

Tracy Sparks, PharmD, BCPS, BCTXP  
University of Maryland Medical Center

Pharmacy technicians have an ever-expanding role within healthcare systems, and the area of transplant is no exception. Meet Kirsten Lee, a transplant pharmacy technician at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC). Kirsten began her career at UMMC in 2010 as a technician in the ambulatory pharmacy. Exposure to the transplant population led Kirsten to pursue a billing coordinator role, which allowed her to gain expertise in Medicare billing and insurance investigations while working closely with patients. In this role, Kirsten became attuned to the challenges that transplant patients can face while caring for their organ transplants, including ensuring access to life-saving anti-rejection medications that need to be taken for the life of the transplant. This background made Kirsten the ideal candidate to take on the transplant pharmacy technician role when it was developed in 2020.

As the transplant pharmacy technician, Kirsten wears many hats. She works closely with transplant clinical pharmacy specialists in addition to the various outpatient pharmacies to support transplant patients on their journey before, during and after their transplant. Prior to transplant, Kirsten assists patients in understanding their anticipated medication costs through involvement in a multidisciplinary pre-transplant education class, which increases their confidence in being able to take care of their transplant. After a patient has undergone a transplant, Kirsten performs an insurance investigation in order to match the patient with the most cost-effective anti-rejection regimens, and completes prior authorizations if needed, which ensures that patients have a clear path to obtaining their medications at discharge. She also assists in making sure that patients are set up within the transplant specialty pharmacy system to allow continued access to medications. Further out from transplant, Kirsten works to identify patients who have suboptimal insurance coverage for necessary medications, using her knowledge of formularies, patient assistance and grant programs to identify alternate options for transplant recipients and working with members of the transplant team to enact these changes. In addition to helping patients to save money on medications, Kirsten also helps to make medications more convenient for patients through her involvement in initiatives to allow patients to perform home administration of select injectables and to pick up medications at locations closer to the transplant clinics.

As evidenced by Kirsten's role, pharmacy technicians can positively impact transplant recipients in many ways, and we look forward to continued expansion of this important role!

## Upcoming Events

### **Tuesday, January 11, 2022**

12:00 pm      Quarterly Medication Safety Webinar – Risk Management in the United States

### **Thursday, January 13, 2022**

12:00 pm      Virtual Technician Program – Drug Abuse and Addiction

5:30 pm      Wellness Event – Yoga

### **Monday, January 24, 2022**

12:00 pm      Addressing the Elephant in the Room: Embracing our Diversity in the Pharmacy Workplace

### **Tuesday, February 15, 2022**

Volume 46, Quarter 1 Pharmascript and Research Supplement submission deadline

### **Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

8:00 am      MSHP Reverse Expo (Industry Registration, Director Registration)

### **Tuesday, April 12, 2022**

12:00 pm      Quarterly Medication Safety Webinar

### **Friday, April 29, 2022**

7:30 am      Spring Seminar and Business Meeting

### **Sunday, May 15, 2022**

Volume 46, Quarter 2 Pharmascript submission deadline