

Member Spotlight

Featuring: Karine Wong, PharmD

The Journey: Can you tell us about a specific turning point in your pharmacy career that led you to where you are today?

I started out as a hospital pharmacist and loved every minute of it. After 8 years, I got burnt out which was a term not commonly used back then. I just worked long hours without complaints or time off. But I still had juice in me. I wanted to work but not necessarily in the basement anymore. I loved writing and ended up publishing a children's book and a romantic novel. I was curious about coding and ended up creating an app for pharmacy students. I loved to talk and was asked to host a podcast series, which I politely accepted. I loved making desserts and ended up with a food company that sold high-protein, low-sugar desserts. And now, I have accumulated so much valuable work-related experience, I'm no longer confined to the basement. The best tip I can give you is to do what you love, learn and master it. No one says it must be related to pharmacy, and no one says you must make six-figures doing it.



The Advice: What is one piece of advice you would give to a student or new practitioner looking to get involved?

Change your mindset about CSHP. Participation is not required. You will not be earning money from volunteering or attending Seminar. In fact, you'll probably be exhausted from helping others, meeting new colleagues, getting CME that you need for your license, and networking with future employers and friends. In other words, you'll be thriving in your TRIBE. Your tribe does not consist of your spouse/partner, your kids, or even your best friend(s). Your tribe is made up of professionals, who think like you, work like you, and have the same challenges as you. And when you get together, you are collectively trying to make the profession better. So, next time, you have a day off from work or school, and

still want to be productive, look at what CSHP has to offer. Is there a health fair? *You go*. Is there an educational dinner? *You go*. Is there a meeting? *You go*. Is there a CSHP member spotlight article about Dr. Karine Wong? *You read it* (insert laughter).

Social Media: Not many pharmacists are outspoken or share their voice through social media however you take it with pride. What is the message you try to get out with your podcast/videos and should others do it as well?

Having a social media presence is a POWERFUL tool, to be seen and heard by anyone. It could be colleagues, patients, consumers, potential employers, and friends. The goal is to draw attention to your brand. The brand is YOU. People do not have to know if you are a cat-lover or that you like matcha strawberry with oat milk. However, they would be interested in you as a pharmacist. *What would you do if there was a drug interaction with grapefruit? What would you recommend for a wet cough- use guaifenesin or dextromethorphan?* You have so much to offer such as counseling tips, advice on the best OTC products, and which homeopathic regimens should be avoided. If you can influence people to change their behavior because of your post, you are an INFLUENCER.

As an influencer, my goal is to change how consumers see us as a profession. Once they realize that we are pharmacy doctors and not just “pill counters”, then consumer behavior changes, followed by mid-level providers and physicians. My posts are never dull or boring. They are engaging, funny and sometimes, you might catch an Easter egg at the end.

The Future: How are you personally working to "move the profession forward" in your current role?

When I started my current role, my goal was to help the surgeon out in the office. Dr. Yuan was a solo entrepreneur with no auxiliary staff. No manager. No receptionist. No medical assistant. No pharmacist or nurse. Just her. On my 1st day, I saw her take a patient back into the room. I asked her if she would like me to take vitals. She looked surprised and replied, “Oh yes! Can you do that? You know how to do that?!” That was when I realized how little physicians knew what we COULD do.

For our patients, I would write clinic notes, obtain medical intake and vital signs, send post-op meds to pharmacies, handle prior authorizations, review pre-op labs/X-rays/EKGs, order pre-op IVFs and antibiotics, and counsel patients on post-op meds and activities.

Her patients are my patients. We work together on every case as a team, like a medical team in a hospital. I don't think what I do is groundbreaking, but what I do is necessary to provide the best patient care as a team. There are plenty of physicians who are trying to manage their practice with a staff of 4 to 5 people. *Why so many?* A manager can't do what a receptionist does, a receptionist can't do what a medical assistant does, a medical assistant can't do what a nurse does, and a nurse can't do what a pharmacist does. But wait... a pharmacist CAN do everything.

Now, you can see the future of pharmacy because I'm living it.