TPA Is Gearing Up for Another Productive Year!

Happy New Year from your friends and colleagues with the Tennessee Pharmacists Association!

It’s always nice to ring in a new year with a renewed vision for a professionally gratifying and prosperous future! I trust that each and every one of you enjoyed a safe and happy holiday season, and I hope you had some time to reflect on your greatest accomplishments in 2016 and set your personal and professional goals for 2017. For me, wrapping up 2016 signaled the completion of my second year of service as TPA Executive Director, and I could not be more humbled or honored to continue to serve the pharmacy profession through this position. Support for TPA continues to be strong, and professional and financial contributions to the future of pharmacy practice through TPA and its subsidiary organizations are greatly appreciated!

Micah Cost, PharmD, MS

Here are 5 key things to know about for 2017 (so far)!

**Advocacy Efforts Related to Pharmacy Practice**

- At the state level, the profession of pharmacy experienced another successful legislative and policy year in 2016. Visit [tnpharm.org/4-26-16-news](http://tnpharm.org/4-26-16-news) for details.
- Efforts focused on “Pharmacists as Providers” continue in 2017. (Visit [pharmacistscare.org](http://pharmacistscare.org) for info.) Although the “Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act” (H.R. 592 / S. 314) was not passed by the US Congress in 2016, this legislation will be re-introduced, and assigned new House and Senate Bill numbers, during the early weeks of the 2017 US Congressional session. It is imperative that we all continue to engage with our US legislators and gain their support for this very important piece of legislation.
- The Tennessee Board of Pharmacy released a complete revision of its rules, which are scheduled to become effective on February 20, 2017. (Visit [bit.ly/BoP-Rules2017](http://bit.ly/BoP-Rules2017) for details.) These updated rules make important changes to many sections of current Board of Pharmacy rules, including those related to community pharmacy practice, health-system practice, long-term care practice, and collaborative pharmacy practice.
- The 110th Tennessee General Assembly will convene at the Capitol in Nashville on January 10, 2017. More information on TPA's legislative priorities for 2017 will be coming soon!

**Big Change Coming to the TennCare Pharmacy Program**

- In 2016, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published the federal Covered outpatient Drugs Final Rule (CMS-2345-FC). The regulation requires state Medicaid programs, including TennCare, to update their reimbursement methodology for covered outpatient drugs. Under the final rule, states must reimburse covered outpatient drugs at actual acquisition cost plus a dispensing fee. The regulation requires all states to be in compliance with the reimbursement requirements of the final rule by April 1, 2017.
- TennCare Pharmacy Providers will be required to complete TWO SURVEYS:
  - Professional Dispensing Fee Survey: Responses due January 13, 2017
  - Actual Acquisition Cost (AAC) Survey: Responses due January 18, 2017
- Visit [tnpharm.org/12-23-16-news](http://tnpharm.org/12-23-16-news) for more information on this change to the TennCare Pharmacy Payment Structure.

There’s more!
Continued Focus on Prevention and Treatment of Prescription Drug Abuse:

• United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek H. Murthy launched his #TurnTheTide campaign (turnthetiderx.org) to end the opioid crisis by raising awareness about opioid addiction and to help concerned Americans identify roles they can play in their communities.
• The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has reduced the amount of opioid controlled substances to be manufactured in 2017. Visit bit.ly/2hT6mRV for details.
• The United States Congress passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) (bit.ly/2hQWFjl) in 2016, enhancing administrative efforts and allocating additional resources to support the prevention and treatment of prescription drug abuse.
• At the state level, TPA worked with legislators to pass legislation which enhances penalties for criminals who commit robberies involving controlled substances on the premises of licensed pharmacies. Visit bit.ly/2iQtQ8E for details.
• At the state level, legislators passed legislation renewing the Prescription Safety Act (tnpharm.org/rx-safety-act-2016). One important change pharmacists should be aware of is that this legislation adds a new provision requiring pharmacists to check the controlled substances monitoring database once annually for patients who are dispensed opioids or benzodiazepines (including tramadol).
• Effective January 1, 2017, the DEA will no longer send its second renewal notification by mail. Instead, an electronic reminder to renew will be sent to the email address associated with the DEA registration. Visit bit.ly/2hTkKJR for details.

TPA Organizational Improvements

• The Tennessee Compounding Pharmacists Society (tnpharm.org/tcp) was formed as a formal Society of TPA, in order to meet the growing needs related to compounding pharmacy practice.
• The TPA Board of Directors revised the organizational Mission Statement (tnpharm.org/mission) to renew TPA’s commitment to you, our valued members.
• The TPA Board of Directors revamped its engagement strategy focused on pharmacists completing residencies and fellowships, new graduate pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians.
• New in 2017, TPA will be rolling out a TPA ad hoc New Practitioner Committee, a committee dedicated to providing a voice for new practitioners within the organization.
• Also new in 2017, TPA will very soon be rolling out automated dues renewal, monthly automated debit features, and the option to store your credit card for future purposes, making it even easier for you to renew your TPA membership, register for meetings, and submit other payments online.

Planning Is Underway for Numerous 2017 TPA Meetings and Engagement Opportunities

• July 7-9, 2017 - TPA Summer Meeting: Kingsport, Tennessee - The dates are not a misprint! This year’s Summer Meeting will be from Friday, July 7, through Sunday, July 9, 2017.
• Summer/Fall 2017 - TPA Emerging Leaders Program
• Summer/Fall 2017 - TPA Geriatric and Long-Term Care Conference
• Fall 2017 - Tennessee Residency Showcase
• Numerous webinars and continuing education opportunities coming in 2017!

We Want to Hear from You!

We certainly want to recognize and thank you all for spending the time needed to provide the best care possible to your patients, and just like you, we want to make sure we’re doing our best to be YOUR professional pharmacy organization in Tennessee. Our members’ financial and professional investments in TPA and pharmacy practice are greatly appreciated and not taken lightly, so we are asking you to help us maintain a high level of quality. In particular, we want to hear your thoughts about how we’re doing overall as an organization to meet members’ needs.

Please visit svy.mk/2iEd3X2 to start the brief (2 minutes) 2017 TPA Satisfaction Survey!

Last but certainly not least, I want to recognize and thank the fine folks on our TPA team here at the office whom I have the privilege to work with every day. These amazingly talented individuals are masters at their crafts and work tirelessly to make sure that TPA members have the best experience possible. They do a wonderful job, and I am grateful to call them my teammates!

Please visit tnpharm.org/staff to “meet” the staff of TPA and find out how to contact each of them.

—Micah