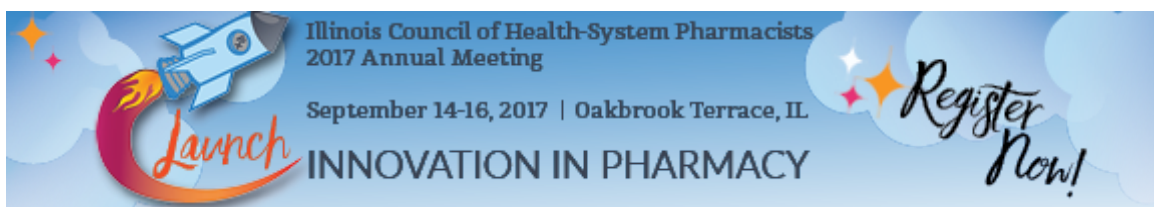




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Increasing Pharmacy Student Exposure to Health-Systems Through Hospital Pharmacy Tours

University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy

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by Henry Okoroike, P2, President-Elect

At the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy (UIC COP), our Chicago campus is located in the middle of the Illinois Medical District and is surrounded by an abundance of hospitals, clinics, and other health systems where a pharmacy student can work and/or go on rotations. For a P1, having so many options for Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPE's) or employment and externships can be overwhelming. Prior to starting pharmacy school, many students have yet to experience inpatient pharmacy and are not sure what to expect from IPPE rotations or a career in a hospital pharmacy. To address these issues, the student chapter of ICHP at UIC created a hospital pharmacy tour program, designed to expose students to hospital pharmacy. These tours provide students an opportunity to view inpatient hospital pharmacy operations and workflow. In addition, the participants are able to talk to current residents and pharmacists about employment, advice about pharmacy school, and their experiences as a pharmacy resident/pharmacist.

As the P1 liaison for UIC's ICHP student chapter, I was charged with creating opportunities for first-year students to experience a variety of pharmacy health system settings. We envisioned the student exposure would be prior to IPPE rotations or job applications, and extern applications. To accomplish this, I took over the Hospital Pharmacy Tour Program this year. In this role, I contacted 6 pharmacy managers to propose having tours at their hospital pharmacy and coordinated scheduling tours with pharmacists and pharmacy residents. These tours included small groups ranging from 4-8 students which facilitated communication between the students and their tour guides. The tours typically occurred in the central pharmacy, where students were exposed to the pharmacy workflow, clean room, medication storage and dispensing units (i.e. Pyxis, Omnicell, Acudose), a satellite, and an outpatient pharmacy. Over the span of 2 weeks, 5 tours at 4 different hospitals were conducted including the University of Illinois Hospital, Rush University Medical Center, Jesse Brown VA Hospital, and Northwestern Memorial Hospital. A total of 30 students attended at least one of these tours. Of note, this was the first time the UIC ICHP chapter toured Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

This program allowed attendees to observe a variety of hospital pharmacy settings they could encounter during their pharmacy training as well as assist in preparing them for future IPPEs or identifying externship/employment opportunities. It was also our goal to give participants a better idea of what potential career opportunities exist in a hospital setting. For these and many other reasons, I am thankful to UIC's ICHP student chapter for tasking me with the development of this program. It has allowed me to grow as a student and a leader and I am confident I can use this experience in my upcoming role as the chapter president-elect for 2017-2018. In addition, we are all extremely grateful to the pharmacy managers, pharmacists, and residents who volunteered their time.

One goal of the UIC ICHP student chapter is to expose pharmacy students to the variety of career options for pharmacists in hospitals and health systems and the Hospital Tour Program was one of the many ways we set out to accomplish that goal this past year. I hope to assist the upcoming P1 liaison in planning an even more successful hospital pharmacy tour program, and expanding the tours to show additional health-system pharmacy settings such as ambulatory care clinics, HMO's, and long-term care facilities.

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