



Advancing Excellence in Pharmacy

KeePosted

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Nontraditional IPPE in Public Health: A Truly Invaluable Journey** [Print This Article](#)

College Connection

by Sara Shakhwar, SSHP P-1 Class Liaison

As my first year at Chicago State University-- College of Pharmacy comes to a close, I have been reflecting on my educational experiences both on and off campus. Having completed two introductory pharmacy practice experiences (IPPEs), I have learned a great deal about the profession and the world of healthcare. For my public health practicum, I was assigned to Northwest Special Recreation Association (NWSRA) Pursuit and Star Academy programs. This rotation was held during spring break – 45 hours of hands on experience in Pursuit, an adult day program for adults with special needs and Star Academy, an after-school program for children and teens with special needs.

Of course, my expectations as a student pharmacist were to be exposed to medicine, research, and clinical/retail settings during my IPPEs and eventually during my advanced pharmacy practice experiences. Before beginning with NWSRA, I was slightly taken off guard by the fact that I was not to be placed in a setting where I would be wearing my white coat and dealing with patients in the traditional sense. I soon discovered that each participant in the program is cared for exceptionally by the wonderful and dedicated staff. However, my specific role as a student pharmacist at the site was not initially clear to me. Slowly but surely, I began to discover my place.

As the week progressed, I was better able to interact and to communicate with the participants. For example, one individual responded well only when direct eye contact was made while another only liked certain snacks. We were able to develop a sense of what worked best for each participant and accommodate to their individual needs. We were also able to delve into their medical history and learn more about their specific disability, how it presented, and what medications were used to manage which conditions. We were able to observe how the medications were benefitting them, as well as how they experienced some apparent adverse effects, such as irritability or drowsiness.

While I had started the week at NWSRA with reservations about how the site would benefit me as a pharmacist, I ended the week with more knowledge and eye-opening experiences than I had imagined. I am a firm believer that education through practice is extremely important. This IPPE allowed me, as

**Directors**

**ICHP Membership Application**

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**Regularly Scheduled Network Meetings**

Chicago Area Pharmacy Directors Network Dinner  
3rd Thursday of Odd Months  
5:30pm

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**Regularly Scheduled Division and Committee Calls**

**Executive Committee**  
Second Tuesday of each month  
at 7:00 p.m.

**Educational Affairs**  
Third Tuesday of each month at  
11:00 a.m.

**Government Affairs**  
Third Monday of each month at  
5:00 p.m.

**Marketing Affairs**  
Third Tuesday of each month at  
8:00 a.m.

**Organizational Affairs**  
Fourth Thursday of each month  
at 12:00 p.m.

**Professional Affairs**  
Fourth Thursday of each month  
at 2:00 p.m.

**New Practitioner Network**  
Second Thursday of each month  
at 5:30 p.m.

**Technology Committee**  
Second Friday of each month at  
8:00 a.m.

**Chicago Area Pharmacy Directors Network Dinner**  
Bi-monthly in odd numbered months with dates to be determined. Invitation only.

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a future health care professional, to learn more about empathy and deal with people of all needs. I feel better prepared to interact with any patient that I encounter and now feel at ease in working with patients that have special needs. Our goal as pharmacists is to provide exceptional patient care; my experience during my public health rotation brought me one step closer to this goal.



