

# Georgia Pharmacy®

Fourth Quarter 2023

**THIS IS YOUR  
FINAL ISSUE.  
RENEW TODAY!**

# FALLS

**Prevention starts in the  
pharmacy (and don't  
leave technicians out)**

## THE 2023 CONVENTION IN PHOTOS



# ATTENTION PHARMACISTS: Know the 5 common coverage gaps that could cost you your career.

With its fast pace and massive volume of medications, the pharmacy profession is ripe for claims and litigation. If you think your employer's coverage will protect you in the event of an error (actual or alleged), complaint, or legal claim, consider the following:

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**GAP #2: Your employer's coverage may only be effective at your place of employment.** If you have a second job, volunteer, or give advice to a neighbor, you'll be on your own.

**GAP #3: If a court judgment exceeds your employer's limits, you may be responsible for paying the difference.** That could cost you tens of thousands of dollars.

**GAP #4: Employer insurance doesn't help when a patient files a complaint to the Board of Pharmacy.** This could put you at risk of a disciplinary action without proper representation.

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## Georgia Pharmacy

The Journal of the Georgia Pharmacy Association

**Georgia Pharmacy magazine is the official publication of the Georgia Pharmacy Association.**

### Chief Executive Officer

Mahlon Davidson

### President/Board Chair

Joe Ed Holt

### President Elect

Ben Ross

### Immediate Past President

Jonathan Sinyard

### Editor

Andrew Kantor

### Art Director

Carole Erger-Fass

### ADVERTISING

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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From the Interim CEO

# Oh, What a Week!



**MAHLON DAVIDSON**

This summer, almost 400 pharmacists, technicians, student pharmacists, family, friends, and GPhA staff descended on the beachside Omni resort on beautiful Amelia Island to enjoy four days of “Celebration, Education, and Opportunity” at the 2023 Georgia Pharmacy Convention.

It was the largest attendance since the pandemic, and included a record 105 students.

To say those who attended experienced that celebration, education, and opportunity would be an understatement. From the many receptions, to the Expo Hall, to the Presidents Bash, there was continuing celebration. Each Georgia college of pharmacy hosted alumni receptions, and there were nightly events for the students which provided ... adequate contact with Omni management.

The Expo Hall was a smashing success. The entire hall sold out and was packed with our exhibitors and attendees interacting for two days, with the highlight of the Georgia Foundation DrawDown! on Friday. Thanks to the more than 50 supporting exhibitors who made this convention possible!

The Saturday night President’s Bash was recognized as the ultimate event of the week. We enjoyed a night of great food, fellowship, and fancy footwork on the dance floor, and we saw children and grandchildren join parents and grandparents on the dance floor in celebration.

Our continuing education committee outdid themselves again, providing over 30 hours of continuing education from Thursday through Sunday morning, with a menu of topics as diverse as the Presidents Bash’s buffet.

This outstanding aspect of our annual convention, to me, has always been the opportunity to bring industry, academia, community and institutional practitioners, and students all



## Georgia pharmacists: We work hard and we play hard.

together for a few days, sharing ideas, concerns and successes, celebrating, advancing and promoting our profession. All in a sunny, congenial setting.

I must take this opportunity to thank the staff of our great association who made this event such a success. Thank you Amanda, Andrew, Ashton, Bob, Catherine, Jonathan, Lia, Lucy, Mary, Melissa, Mindy, Pat, Rhonda, and Ruth Ann for planning and implementing this year’s outstanding convention.

And we all thank our presenters and speakers for the wisdom and significance of your addresses to our attendees.

To the record number of you who joined us in Amelia this year, thank you for making this convention such a memorable one. I know you will plan to meet again on the sands of Amelia Island next June. 📍

*Mahlon Davidson is GPhA’s interim CEO, a past president of the association, and a new grandfather.*

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



These are the newest members of GPhA's President's Circle — people who recruit their fellow pharmacists, technicians, academics, and others to become part of the association. Recruit a member and join!

## PLATINUM

**Wanda Hickman**, Monroe

## SILVER

**Annette Duncan**, Griffin

**Ivey McCurdy**, Lakeland

**Ben Ross**, Statesboro

## Academy of Clinical and Health-System Pharmacists

Carly Albright, Atlanta  
Colin Kennedy, Canton  
Philip Mensah, Kennesaw  
Ruth Silalahi, Ellijay

## Academy of Employee Pharmacists

Autumn Allen, Dudley  
Denise Bennett, Nanhunta  
Anna Braddy, Dallas  
Annsley Bryan, Dallas  
John Mark Carter, Savannah  
Alyssa Chaudhari, Watkinsville  
Amy Clegg, Social Circle  
Jennifer Cown, Good Hope  
Eric Holgate, North Augusta  
Karla Jaynes, Suwanee  
Grayson Layton, Tallapoosa  
Kate O'Reilly, Athens  
Magdalene Oke, Riverdale  
Nikki Patel, Cumming  
Allison Phillips, Douglas  
Hunter Phillips, Douglas  
Sara Pittman, Statham  
Tatyana Sidorova, Brookhaven  
Keith Warren, Decatur  
Heather Yarbrough, Kathleen

## Academy of Independent Pharmacists

Christopher Dawson, Blackshear  
Matthew Donato, Brunswick  
Margaret Leech, Newnan  
Hetal Patel, Folkston  
Sindy Strickland, Glennville

## Academy of Pharmacy Technicians

William Andrews, Columbus  
Sean Bailey, Warner Robbins  
Zoe Bell, Ellaville  
Kaidee Bolden, Social Circle  
Ally Brooks, Covington  
Alexis Brown, Conyers  
Dakota Brown, Metter  
Laura Brown, Lakeland  
Bethany Buice, Social Circle  
Airiana Burtin, Oxford  
Heather Conner, Lakeland  
Lydia Delay,  
Brett Duncan,  
Kirstie Durrance, Lakeland  
Spencer Edens,  
Asia Evans, Monroe  
Rachael Farris, Statesboro  
Ashlynn Ferguson, Oxford  
Christina Hanson, Monroe  
Marcy Ingles', Acworth  
Ramzi James, Lakeland  
Jacob Joiner,

Jordan Kidd, Douglasville  
Natalie Lane, Lakeland  
Radiant Miller, Ellenwood  
Rosemary Miller,  
Susan Morris, Villa Rica  
Jessica Moye, Villa Rica  
Crystal Murphey, Social Circle  
Ashleigh North, Stockton  
Brandy Pannell, Monroe  
Sheraun Price, Atlanta  
Kristen Prichard, Monroe  
Katelyn Story, Loganville  
Megan Teale, Statham  
Hannah Webrand, Ray City  
Alice Williams, Leesburg  
Ruby Zuniga, Lakeland

## Other new members

Arezoo Akhavan-Sadeghi, Marietta  
Stephen Ansel, Sharpsburg  
Julia Klingenbeck, Decatur  
William Perry, Alpharetta  
Robin Polite, Buford  
Huy Tran, Norcross



This is the newest member of GPhA's 100% Club — Georgia pharmacies where 100 percent of employees are GPhA members. Find out more at [GPhA.org/100percent](http://GPhA.org/100percent).

## Carmichael Drugs

Monroe

Owner: Wanda Hickman

## Lakeland Drug Co.

Lakeland

Owner: Ivey McCurdy

## YOUR WORD IS POWERFUL.



## TELL A FRIEND ABOUT GPHA.

# PHARMPAC 2023

## INVESTING IN PHARMPAC IS INVESTING IN YOUR PRACTICE.

The following pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, students, and others have joined GPhA's PharmPAC for the 2023 calendar year.

The contribution levels are based on investment through August 31, 2023

### DIAMOND INVESTORS (\$4,800 or \$400/month or more)



**RALPH BALCHIN**  
Fayetteville



**CHARLES BARNES**  
Valdosta



**SCOTT MEEKS**  
Douglas



**BEN ROSS**  
Statesboro



**FRED SHARPE**  
Albany

### TITANIUM INVESTORS (\$2,400 or \$200/month)



**ROBERT DYKES**  
Cochran



**DAVID GRAVES**  
Macon



**LON LEWIS**  
St. Simons Island



**TOMMY LINDSEY**  
Omega



**BRANDALL LOVVORN**  
Bremen



**DANNY TOTH**  
LaGrange

#### Platinum Investors (\$1,200 or \$100/month)

Thomas Bryan  
William Cagle  
Hugh Chancy  
Wes Chapman  
Keith Chapman  
Paige Clark  
Ben Cravey  
Marshall Curtis  
Blake Daniel  
Al Dixon  
Annette Duncan  
Jack Dunn  
Michael Farmer  
Vic Johnson  
Marsha Kapiloff  
Ira Katz  
Kenneth Kicklighter  
David Leach  
Jonathan Marquess

Ivy McCurdy  
Chad McDonald  
Amy Miller  
Drew Miller  
Houston Rogers  
Tim Short  
Teresa Smith  
Chris Thurmond  
Alex Tucker

#### Gold Investors (\$600 or \$50/month)

Nicholas Bland  
William Brewster  
Liza Chapman  
Mahlon Davidson  
Sharon Deason  
Benjamin Dupree  
Kimberly Elrod  
Kerry Griffin  
Ann Hansford  
Robert Hatton

Wanda Hickman  
Ted Hunt  
Michael Iteogu  
Robert Moody  
Sherri Moody  
Mark Niday  
Sujal Patel  
Bill Prather  
Ola Reffell  
Daryl Reynolds  
Robert Rogers  
Sharon Sherrer  
David Stanley  
Dean Stone  
Krista Stone  
Mike Tarrant  
James Thomas  
Chuck Wilson  
Thomas Whitworth

#### Silver Investors (\$300 or \$25/month)

Michael Azzolin  
Claude Bates  
Lance Boles  
Savannah Cunningham  
Ed Dozier  
Greg Drake  
Marshall Frost  
Neal Hollis  
Joe Ed Holt  
Jason Jones  
Laura Ko  
Willie Latch  
Michael Lewis  
Pete Nagel  
Kieu Nhi  
Melissa Reybold  
Terry Shaw  
Thomas Sherrer  
Jonathan Sinyard

Renee Smith  
Austin Tull  
Randall Thonton

#### Bronze Investors (\$150 or \$12.50/month)

Cannon Drugs  
Ashlyn Carter  
Bryce Carter  
Bob Coleman  
Amanda Gaddy  
Johnathan Hamrick  
James Harkleroad  
Doug Hoey  
Phillip James  
Susan Kane  
Brenton Lake  
Jeff Lurey  
Charles Maret  
Joseph McEver  
Medi-Thrift Pharmacy  
Rabun Neves  
Sindy Strickland

#### Member Investors (up to \$150)

Robert Ault  
J. Cain  
Ken Couch  
Guy Cox  
Liddy Cronan  
Gerald Hartman  
Lise Hennick  
William McLeer  
Whitney Pickett  
Robert Probst  
Thomas Rawls  
Zahra Shaghagh  
James Stowe

Let's beat our goal in 2023! Visit [GPhA.org/PharmPAC](http://GPhA.org/PharmPAC) to find out more.



**2023 GOAL!**

\*As of August 31, 2023

## WELCOME NEW AIP MEMBERS!



Welcome David Tucker, PharmD, of Wyatt's Pharmacy in Lithia Springs to the Academy of Independent Pharmacy!

Said said GPhA VP of AIP Jonathan Marquess, "David and his staff have a passion for patient care, and it shows!"



And welcome Bryan Green, Suzanne Brethamer, and all of Premier Drugstore of Douglasville!

"Bryan and his staff have built a great community pharmacy," Marquess. "It was a pleasure hearing about their passion for weight loss and patient care."

## THE MIGHTY FALLS A FEW STEPS



Paxlovid, which once had a 88% chance of preventing serious Covid-19, now seems to be only about 37% effective at preventing hospitalization in high-risk patients, according to a study out of UNC and the Cleveland Clinic. The good news is that it's

still 84% effective in preventing Covid death.

Why the big change? The original clinical trials "were conducted among unvaccinated patients who had limited natural immunity," so the percentages swung in Paxlovid's favor.

## WHO'S PAYING PRESCRIBERS?

A reminder that this exists: The Open Payments Database lets you look up physicians and see how much money they're getting from drug companies. Check out (or have your patients check out) **[openpaymentsdata.cms.gov](https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov)**.

Fun fact: California, and only California, requires prescribers to notify patients that the site exists.

## NOTES

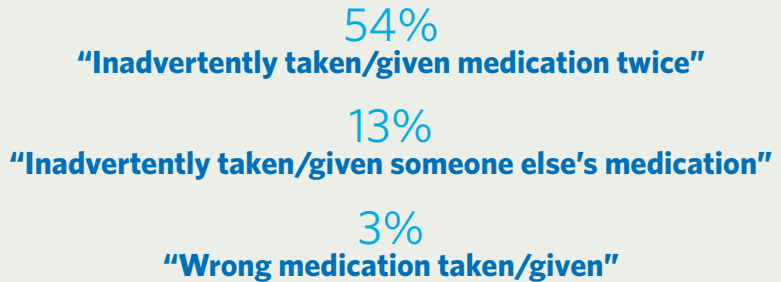
### CAN WE DO BETTER? I THINK WE CAN DO BETTER

A new WalletHub study ranks Georgia #48 out of the 50 states and DC for overall vaccination rates — that's everything from basic childhood shots to flu, tetanus, shingles, Covid ... you get the idea. Only Arizona, Alaska, and Mississippi did worse.

### ADHD MED ERRORS SKYROCKET

A lot of kids take ADHD meds — 5% by current estimates. Apparently they're not always careful about taking them, as ADHD medication errors have jumped 300% (!) since 2000. These aren't doctor or pharmacist errors — these are patient/caregiver\* errors.

Based on data from poison control centers, researchers from Ohio's Nationwide Children's Hospital found the most common scenarios:



Of those cases, more than 4% "were associated with a serious medical outcome." Yikes.

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### CHAINS STRUGGLE TO DIFFERENTIATE

While Rite Aid is closing stores as part of an impending bankruptcy filing, other big chains are downsizing for their own reasons. CVS said it's closing 900 stores through 2024, and Walgreens will be closing 150 locations and cutting hours in 1,100 more.

Their biggest issue: Differentiation.

As one Forbes columnist put it, "[U]nless one notices the nameplate on the door, little distinguishes shopping in one major drugstore from another. They sell much the same stuff in pretty much the same way."



# Academy of Independent Pharmacy

## FALL MEETING 2023

Sunday, October 22nd, 2023  
Crowne Plaza Atlanta SW Hotel  
201 Aberdeen Pkwy  
Peachtree City, GA 30269



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### Profit is in the Home - LTC Medical at Home

Leanne Haley-Brown, RPh  
VP PharmaComplete,  
Co-Founder of LTC @ Home Network



### High Level Medicare Part D Contract Strategy

Melanie Maxwell, President of AlignRx



### Medical Cannabis - A Pharmacists Perspective

Tony Singletary, PharmD, MBA,  
General Manager, Cannabis Dispensary in  
Pooler, GA, Botanical Sciences



### Trends for 2024: Lively Q&A

Jonathan G. Marquess, PharmD, CDCES,  
FAPhA, VP AIP, GPhA

## Member Testimonials

**"AIP Meetings present a great opportunity for networking and working with other pharmacy owners to solve common challenges."**

**"AIP has supported independent pharmacies in Georgia with expanding clinical services offered, fostering greater cash flow for members."**

**"I attend AIP Meetings for an update on current legislative initiatives that are of great benefit to GA independent pharmacy."**

Contact any of the following for Registration Information- Rhonda Bonner, Rbonner@gpha.org  
Ashton Sullivan, Asullivan@gpha.org  
Catherine Daniel, cdaniel@gpha.org

# STUDENTS: THIS BOARD'S FOR YOU

BY WILL MARQUESS, P3, University of Georgia College of Pharmacy



My name is Will Marquess and I am a third year pharmacy student at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. This year I have the pleasure of serving on the GPhA Student Leadership Board as president. Since its

creation in 2019, the Student Leadership Board has been creating student leaders for advocacy and involvement at each of the four pharmacy schools across Georgia. When I was accepted into pharmacy school and introduced to student organizations, GPhA stood out to me as a place where pharmacy students from across the state could interact and create new opportunities to keep students involved.

During my time with GPhA, I have made lifelong friendships and connections which will help narrate my future in the profession. My goals for this year include building on the successful student involvement and membership growth at annual convention and overall awareness for students of the opportunities GPhA offers during school and after graduation.

The Student Leadership Board is made up of 18 students from across the four pharmacy schools who serve a two year term. Students are elected by the leadership board and begin their term as junior members and then serve as senior members for their final year. Therefore the board consists of a president, president-elect, and four student leaders representing student members on the campuses of Mercer University College of Pharmacy, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, South University College of Pharmacy, and the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy.

Each student on the board comes from a diverse background of pharmacy practices, experiences, and niches, allowing the board to encompass all of pharmacy. GPhA's official mission is to "promote, enhance, and advocate for the profession of pharmacy" which is exactly what the Student Leadership Board wants to stand for and support. Each



...and we have a lot of fun, too

year this group helps coordinate GPhA events like GPhA Day at the Dome, spring and fall region meetings, and the Georgia Pharmacy Convention. These events become some of the most memorable moments for students during their time in pharmacy school.

To the student members of GPhA, I challenge you to continue being involved and present when GPhA presents opportunities for students to network and make connections with pharmacists from around the state. Each chance you have to make a connection could be a job opportunity down the line. There is a never a second chance for a first impression.

To the pharmacist members of GPhA, thank you for your continued passion and support for students year in and year out. Your leadership and vision is inspiring to students every time we get the chance to meet you. Thank you for allowing me to grow up around a group of innovators, entrepreneurs, and delegates who have pushed the profession to its full potential and beyond. I am excited to continue your legacy! [G](#)

*Will Marquess is president of the GPhA Student Leadership Board and a 2025 University of Georgia College of Pharmacy PharmD candidate.*

## Meet the New Team

GPhA's 2023-24 Student Leadership Board represents student pharmacists from Georgia's four pharmacy schools, helping them connect to and get involved with their profession.

### President:

#### Will Marquess, UGA 2025



Ever since I got to serve a patient in a pharmacy, I was hooked by helping those in need. I have been to the pharmacy before to get medicine for my grandparents, and I truly enjoyed the hometown feel and hospitality.

As I am completing my first year, I am looking to gain more experience and leadership experiences.

### President-Elect:

#### Madison Marquess, UGA 2026



I plan on practicing in the state of Georgia for my entire career. I also plan on being a member of GPhA for life and continuing the legacy the pioneer pharmacists have set before us! Regardless of your passion in pharmacy

— clinical, community, academia, etc. — GPhA represents and advocates for YOU.

### Immediate Past President:

#### Andrew Wilson, PCOM 2024



I joined the Student Leadership Board to provide a voice for PCOM in this great association, foster connections with other pharmacy programs in Georgia, and create networks between PCOM students and GPhA members.

## MERCER UNIVERSITY

### Senior Members

#### Tyesha Oton, Mercer 2025



I want to continue being a leader of GPhA and learn from the best pharmacists in Georgia and share my knowledge with others all while creating a more positive environment for everyone.

#### Brooke Stephen, Mercer 2025



I hope to be able to spark interest in my fellow classmates to get involved and pay attention to what is happening in our state regarding the pharmacy profession and how we can impact and advocate for pharmacists and future pharmacists like ourselves.

### Mercer Junior Members

#### Tessa Kemp, Mercer 2026



I joined GPhA to network with nearby pharmacists but have since learned how much more GPhA has to offer. I did not realize the extent legal regulation impacted the practice of pharmacy. I have become aware of the important issues that are constantly being debated and how GPhA works to protect the practice of pharmacy.

#### Haley Nitz, Mercer 2026



My goal is to be more active in my community so I may advocate for patients and have a positive impact on their prescription care. Politics play a major role in the healthcare field, and I believe it is important to be involved in these legal changes.

## PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

### Senior Members

#### Makeda Lovelace, PCOM 2025



I joined GPhA because I found it to be an excellent networking resource. I pursued leadership roles because I could make my already loud voice project further, and help bring issues that are important to me and my classmates forward. I have discovered an interest in politics that I didn't know I had!

**Charbel Aoun, PCOM 2025**



I've learned that community involvement is just as vital as personal growth to grow as a leader. Participating with GPhA in this capacity is truly an honor, especially from a first-generation student background where many burdens make it difficult to seek opportunities. I hope to use these future opportunities to excel in my education, attain a residency position, and become an exceptional healthcare leader and advocate.

**PCOM Junior Members**

**Gau Soua Yang, PCOM 2026**



I have always been interested in owning my independent pharmacy. I want to enhance my knowledge more about the world of pharmacy. Not only do I wish to learn and gain more experience from GPhA, but I too wish to learn more about the advocacy involvement.

**Adaisha Pringle, PCOM 2026**



My end goal is owning my own pharmacy one day but with a vet clinic attached. This idea sprouted from wanting to have a place that helps improve the lives of not only people but also animals. I also want make lifelong connections with others around me to support me as I make this pharmacy dream a successful reality.

**SOUTH UNIVERSITY**

**Senior Members**

**John Otasowie, South 2025**



I cherish the opportunity to build meaningful connections with other student pharmacists and pharmacists practicing within and outside the state of Georgia. These I believe will play a huge role in my quest to becoming a successful pharmacist.

**Justin Allen, South 2025**



My main career goal is to one day own my own community pharmacy. Some of the connections that I have already made have helped me to further my experience and give me the skills I would need to accomplish this goal.

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

**Senior Members**

**Roswell Cole, UGA 2025**



I strongly believe that pharmacy has been one of the strongest fields in terms of advocating for its own advancement. I know that I will have the opportunity to create great opportunities for my colleagues in practice and at all four pharmacy schools in our state.

**Emma Covington, UGA 2025**



My dream job is to work as a pediatric pharmacist. I appreciate the opportunity to gain a better understanding of pharmacy legislation, and I am confident that continuing on the student leadership board for GPhA will help me to find my place in advocacy and expand my ability to care for patients.

**UGA Junior Members**

**Paige Stegall, UGA 2026**



While I am passionate about patient advocacy, I am also passionate about advocating for pharmacists and the communities that our pharmacists serve. Upon graduation, my goal is to complete residency program and become a clinical pharmacist in Georgia.

**Harrison Hughes, UGA 2025**



I want to be able to build interpersonal relationships with my patients while having a meaningful impact on their quality of life. This will precede my personal goal of owning a pharmacy with the mindset of bettering the community while providing quality services containing meaningful advice in a medically underserved community. [G](#)

**HEY STUDENTS! Want to get the most out of your GPhA membership? Contact your school's SLB rep and ask, "How do I get the most out of my GPhA membership?"**

# A Day at the Braves

GPhA's sixth annual Day at the Braves was Sunday, September 10 at Truist Park, where 54 pharmacists, family, and friends spent a sunny, steamy Sunday afternoon watching as the Braves won their 93<sup>rd</sup> game of this season and clinched their sixth consecutive playoff birth.

The fact that that every year GPhA has hosted a Day at the Braves the team makes the play-offs has not gone unnoticed.... [📷](#)



## CONVENTION 2023 IN PHOTOS

The 2023 Georgia Pharmacy Convention was one of the largest in association history, with almost 400 attendees, including a record 105 student pharmacists.

The Expo Hall was sold out for both days, and completely packed, too (and not just for the DrawDown! fundraising game).

Honorees were a who's who of Georgia Pharmacy (either already or soon to be), and

incoming president Joe Ed Holt received a much-deserved standing ovation for his acceptance speech.

There was plenty of fun to be had, too, at luncheons, dinners, and of course the Saturday night President's Bash.

One Omni staffer was overheard summing it up nicely: "I thought pharmacists were supposed to be boring."



Scott Meeks of Douglas was named Independent Pharmacist of the Year



Chris Cornelison's keynote was fun, energetic, and motivating



Incoming president Joe Ed Holt gives his acceptance speech



# AWARDS

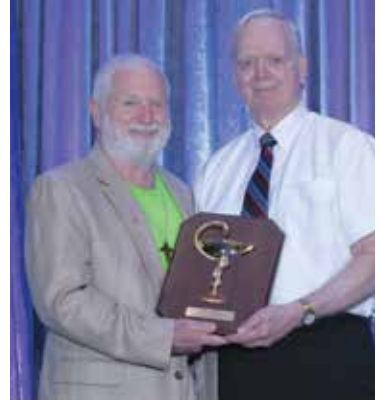
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PCOM Georgia student Andrew Wilson was Jim Bartling Student Pharmacist Of the Year



Hugh Chancy of Hahira (left) received the President's Award from outgoing president Jonathan Sinyard



Ben Flanigan of Acworth (right) was honored with the 2023 Bowl of Hygeia



Mercer student Laine Frazier (center) received the Jeff Lurey Independent Community Pharmacy Scholarship



UGA professor Dr. Ashley Hannings (left) was named Faculty Member of the Year



Melodi Graham of Chancy Drugs in Valdosta (left) was named Pharmacy Technician of the Year



Dawn Sassine of Atlanta was named the Pharmacist Mutual Distinguished Young Pharmacist



Dr. Annette Duncan of Griffin received the Excellence in Innovation Award



Thomas Sherrer of Marietta (left) was named GPhA Outstanding Region President

---

Not pictured: Larry Braden Award winner **John Anderson, Sr.**; Four-Year Student Attendance Award winner **Brooks Patterson**, UGA

# STUDENT PHARMACISTS

## GPhA 2023 Convention Wrap Up

This year the Georgia Pharmacy Convention saw record numbers of students enjoy top-tier panel discussions and networking events on Amelia Island.

BY ANDREW WILSON

**FROM A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE,** the Georgia Pharmacy Convention not only provided opportunities to network with GPhA pharmacists, but a list of events designed just for us.

Students arriving on Thursday were able to attend CE courses throughout the day and network with alumni at dinners for three of Georgia's four pharmacy schools (sorry, PCOM). In between, Mike Tarrant with Tarrant Financial kicked off the student events by discussing loan management and financial planning — two important issues for future pharmacists.

Saturday was full of student-specific events beginning with two star-studded panels.

The “State of the Industry” panel discussed the direction of pharmacy and what to expect as students becoming pharmacists. This panel included NCPA CEO Doug Hoey, NCPA President Hugh Chancy, GPhA VP and NCPA board member Jonathan Marquess, Georgia state representative Butch Parrish, and Georgia congressman Buddy Carter.

The second panel discussed advice for finding jobs and what employers look for in potential hires. This panel included Brandon Brooks from Publix, Mollie Durham from CVS, Chuck Page from Kroger, Robert Sharpe from U-Save-It, independent pharmacy owner Pam Marquess, and Tracy Dabbs of the Georgia Department of Public Health. Students were then treated to a lunch and learn by RxOwnership for some advice on starting a pharmacy and discovering new revenue streams, after which it was time for a break as students faced off in a cornhole tournament.

Outside of scheduled events there were a number of available opportunities. The Expo Hall hosted vendors with the latest and greatest technologies in the industry. Free professional headshots were available each morning. General sessions with keynote speakers and two student awards (the Jeff Lurey Independent Community Pharmacy Scholarship and the Jim Bartling Student Pharmacist of the Year). And the beach/pool provided networking for classmates and new friends. Capping off the convention was the Saturday night President's Bash with dinner and dancing.



The Georgia Pharmacy Convention is always an amazing experience for students and pharmacists, but don't forget GPhA region meetings, practice-academy meetings, and networking events throughout the year. Reach out to your school's Student Leadership Board representative to learn more!

*Andrew Wilson (PCOM, 2024) is the immediate past president of GPhA's Student Leadership Board.*





# AND MORE!





# STEADI as she goes: Screening patients at risk of falls

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who practice in community pharmacy should screen for older adults who are at risk for falls. Here's what they need to know.

BY SUSAN W. MILLER AND DAVID W. M. TAYLOR

**UNDER THE UMBRELLA** of “geriatric syndromes” are a host of issues that can accumulate to the point when a senior simply can't compensate — cognitive impairment, chronic/persistent pain, delirium, depression, frailty, incontinence ... you get the picture. And high on the list is the danger of falls.

Falls are more common than most people realize. A third of adults over the age of 65 fall annually, and this increases to 40–50% for those over 80. Falls are the primary cause of hip fractures and a leading cause of mortality in older people. And then there are the costs: Falls and fall-related injuries have been estimated to cost Americans more than \$50 billion per year with Medicare bearing the greatest costs.

Multiple factors contribute to the risk of falling. Some, such as advanced age, female gender, prior falls, lower body muscle weakness, impaired gait and balance, poor vision, postural hypotension, and even fear of falling, are factors that can't be changed. But others — extrinsic or modifiable risk factors — include environmental factors such as stairs, rugs, lighting, and assistive devices. And, notably, prescription and non-prescription medications can increase fall risk.

## The STEADI initiative

Obviously pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are in an excellent position to mitigate the risk from medications. It's more than simply knowing that certain medications can increase that risk; there are, in fact, evidence-based treatment interventions that target specific risk factors including vestibular and balance disorders, postural hypotension, impaired vision, foot and ankle disorders, home hazards, and even fear of falling.

The CDC has collected those interventions under its Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths, & Injuries (STEADI) and STEADI-Rx initiatives. They provide an evidence-based framework for screening, assessment, and treatment to mitigate falls in older adults applicable in pharmacy practice, especially in the setting of the pharmacist serving the community.

The STEADI-Rx algorithm begins with screening to determine if an individual is at risk or not at risk for falls. (The CDC recommends that everyone over 65 be screened for falls at least annually.) That screening can be efficiently incorporated into the existing pharmacist/pharmacy technician workflow during medication review, medication synchronization, and medication counseling.

Medication therapy management (MTM) also provides an opportunity for screening for falls. Patients should be screened if taking four or more chronic medications or one or more high-risk medications, and/or any time the patient presents with an acute fall.

Screening can be as simple as asking three key questions or by having the patient complete a questionnaire such as the CDC's Stay Independent Tool or the National Council on Aging's Falls Free CheckUp. Answering yes to any of the three questions means the patient is at risk.

The 3 key questions:

- Do you feel unsteady while standing or walking?
- Do you worry about falling?
- Have you fallen in the past year? If yes, how many times and were you injured?



### The next steps

Screening results should be documented and communicated to the primary care provider. (A provider consult/fall-screening form is available as part of STEADI-Rx.) For those who screen positive for fall risk, the second component of STEADI-Rx involves assessing the patient's modifiable risk factors including medications that increase fall risk, inquiring about postural hypotension, and recommending effective prevention strategies.

A medication review should be scheduled with the patient to discuss medication therapy problems. The pharmacist or pharmacy technician should ask about signs of postural hypotension and assess changes in blood pressure from lying to standing, depending on the resources and equipment that is available. They can also provide some fall-prevention education specific to the patient, including suggestions involving vision, footwear, home hazards, gait, strength, and balance, or refer the patient to a community exercise or fall prevention program.

The third component of STEADI-Rx is coordinating care with the primary care or prescribing physician to reduce the identified risk factors. Provider consult forms are available in STEADI-Rx to communicate the patient's fall risk factors, medication therapy problems and recommendations, and referral for evaluation of gait, strength, and balance.

The pharmacist or technician should follow up with the patient in 30–90 days to discuss that care plan and address any issues that have arisen. They can also take the opportunity to consult other providers including physical therapists, occupational therapists, or podiatrists.

Effective fall prevention requires communication and collaboration among the patient's healthcare team in clinical and community settings. A multi-disciplinary team is needed to address the complex combination of factors contributing to falls.

## RESOURCES

### CDC STEADI Initiative

Includes the STEADI-Rx algorithm, screening form, medication information, training resources, checklists, and more:

**CDC.gov/steady**



### More resources from GPhA

Including the Beers Criteria and information from the CDC and the National Council on Aging: **GPhA.org/steady**

*Susan W. Miller, BS Pharm, PharmD, is professor of pharmacy practice and the Hood-Meyer Alumni Endowed Chair at Mercer University College of Pharmacy.*

*David W. M. Taylor, PT, DPT, FNAP, is clinical associate professor and director of clinical education at the Mercer University College of Health Professions, Department of Physical Therapy.*

# Fall Risk: The Pharmacy Technician's Role

BY CHRISTINE CLINE-DAHLMAN

**IN A WORLD WHERE** clinical services are incorporated into pharmacy practice, do you still have your pharmacy technicians handling only dispensing tasks? It's time for that to change.

You should be getting more out of your pharmacy technicians, especially if you're moving toward a value-based reimbursement revenue model — one that relies on clinical service revenue. But how can a pharmacy justify a technician's wage with clinical tasks like "screening for falls"?

The key is incorporating these clinically-based tasks into your existing workflow. Does this mean a technician has to leave the dispensing workstation to participate in a "screening"? Not at all.

If a clinical task such as screening for a fall is added into the technician's workflow, then you can start to view patient's outcome results as part of that workflow. Screening for falls and fall potential in particular is a solid starting point, as there's a list of high-risk medications that can be a factor for a fall.

Between national certification and the advanced training that's now offered, pharmacy technicians are expected to know a level of pharmacology — particularly technician product verification, more commonly known as 'tech-check-tech.' They're required to know the primary characteristics of medications including...

- Both brand and generic names along with accurate spelling and pronunciation;
- Their therapeutic purpose, based on anatomy and its bodily function;
- Their therapeutic category plus all the medications within that category;
- Their function in the body with potential side effects;
- Recommended dosing for the medication — both pediatric and adult.

Most often, a pharmacist hopes that technicians can be incorporated into the existing dispensing workflow. Here are a few suggestions to start the process:

Expect your technician to build their medication knowledge. Share the High-Risk Med List and also introduce the Beers Criteria as a source for all of your patients 65 years of age and older. (See "Resources" for a link to both.)

That information helps technicians with order en-

try, inventory management for therapeutic substitution, and can even streamline your billing when step therapy or prior authorization is required.

## Patient touchpoints

Medication synchronization is the foundation for an efficient dispensing workflow, and a perfect time for technicians to engage with and screen patients.

In fact, you should recognize every phone call — received by or made from the pharmacy to a senior patient — as an opportunity to screen. If nothing else, those calls should also produce a clinical pearl of information about a patient. Create a script with a few questions — "Just checking, have you had any problems with balance?" — for technicians to use.

The same is even more true for any scheduled appointments with your senior patients for immunizations, point of care testing, supplement counseling, or even to monitor blood pressure or glucose. These are all opportunities to incorporate fall screening. (If you use a new patient intake form, provide a single question on your form to create opportunity to screen in greater detail. This starts the process of screening.)

Healthcare payers are always looking for ways not to pay part of that \$50 billion annual cost of fall injuries. That's why these steps, which help optimize patient medication, can lead to more consistent revenue. First, they lead to successful, non-auditable reimbursement — you're documenting the patient screening, communication, and care plans. Second, successful patient outcomes lead to high reimbursement levels for dispensing through EQUiPP scores of hypertension and diabetes medications. And of course your collaborative relationship with prescribers can mean continued business as you're now assisting the prescriber with their HEDIS measures.

The bottom line to your bottom line is that using your technicians as more than bottle-fillers can mean increased revenue — indirectly at first, but building the foundation for consistent income in the future. [🔗](#)

*Christine Cline-Dahlman, BFA, CPhT-ADV, is president of education firm PharmTechForward and interim director of education for the Georgia Pharmacy Association.*

# SAFETY TIP

## TELEPHONE PRESCRIPTIONS

The longer the person receiving the prescription waits to write it down, the greater the chance they may forget key information.

The **read back** method helps assure communication and transcription accuracy. In this method, a pharmacist first records the prescription information on a prescription blank, then, **reads back** the information to the prescriber to make sure it is correct.



**For more information about the APMS PSO Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program, go to [medicationsafety.org](https://www.medicationsafety.org) or call APMS at (866) 365-7472.**

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# Keep in touch

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### GPhA'S MEMBER SERVICE PARTNERS

#### Alliance for Patient Medication Safety

Quality assurance  
compliance resources  
[medicationsafety.org](http://medicationsafety.org)  
(866) 365-7472

#### PACE

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[pacealliance.com](http://pacealliance.com)

#### Pharmacists Mutual Insurance Company

Workmans' Compensation  
Insurance  
Hutton Madden  
(800) 247-5930  
[hutton.madden@phmic.com](mailto:hutton.madden@phmic.com)

#### Pharmacy Technician Certification Board

PTCB.org  
(800) 363-8012

#### SoFi

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(855) 456-7634

Got a concern about a GPhA program or service? Want to compliment or complain? Drop a note to [info@gpha.org](mailto:info@gpha.org).



**Georgia Pharmacy**  
ASSOCIATION



From the GPhA President/Board Chair

# Miracles: You gotta believe



BY JOE ED HOLT

Set against the backdrop of the Cold war and the intense rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States, the 1980 winter Olympics were played in Lake Placid, New York. On February 22, 1980, during the medal round of the men's hockey tournament, the

Soviet Union played the United States.

To say that the US was heavily not favored would be an understatement. The USSR was a four-time defending gold medalist, and largely consisted of professional players with international experience. On that day, though, we pulled through and beat the Soviets 4-3, and in the excitement of the win, sportscaster Al Michaels shouted the phrase that would define the moment: "Do you believe in miracles? YES!"

I believe in miracles. 22 years ago, I was stealing drugs from the pharmacy that I worked at in order to feed a massive addiction to opiates and Adderall. On October 8, 2001, I was caught and, thinking my life was over, attempted suicide. Thanks to programs that were put in effect by GPhA and the Georgia Pharmacy Foundation, I got help and was put on the road to recovery. I would not be writing this today without the efforts of the association.

*Do you believe in miracles? Yes!*

The truth is that GPhA has worked in the lives of everyone that sits in this room. If you have survived an audit thanks to the resources of AIP or if you have given an immunization at your pharmacy or if you were able to renew your license thanks to CE provided by the association or if you were able to keep a customer from having to transfer their prescriptions because of our anti-steering efforts, then your life

has been affected by GPhA. Everyone seated here today can thank GPhA for contributing something to their practice.

*Do you believe in miracles? Yes!*

I believe in miracles, but I also believe that sometimes hard work and perseverance contributes to those miracles. As the newly inducted president of GPhA, I promise you that we will continue to fight to make sure you have everything that you need to properly care for the people who put their faith and trust in you



1980: A miracle ... on ice

daily, no matter what the practice setting.

I need your help though. We have been able to accomplish so much with only a fraction of the pharmacists in the state of Georgia as members. I ask that each of you reach out to one person who is not a member. Be excited about GPhA. Make them want to be a member. There truly is strength in numbers.

It is an honor and a privilege to write this — my first column as president of this association, representing the greatest group of pharmacists in the country. Thank you! 🇺🇸

*Joe Ed Holt is chairman of the board and president of the Georgia Pharmacy Association.*

## This story brought to you by "The Last of Us"

"Plant Fungus Infected a Human in First Reported Case of Its Kind": A patient in India, without any other health issues, contracted a serious case of silver leaf disease in his throat, "providing a rare example of a pathogen seemingly making an enormous leap across entire kingdoms in the tree of life."

The researchers who wrote the case study called it "... perplexing. If not a touch concerning."

(After two months of treatment and two years of checkups, he's fine.)



Andrew Kantor/MidJourney

## Weight loss: the biggest losers

Sure, new weight loss meds are great for patients, and they can potentially head off a variety of health issues. But has anyone thought of what Mounjaro, Ozempic, Wegovy, and kin will do to the snack food market? Yes, someone has — Reuters commentators explain how these new drugs spell trouble for some old friends:

*"During trials, patients showed reduced appetite and even an aversion towards food generally. This has the potential to affect giant groups such as Switzerland's Nestlé, Cadbury and Oreo maker Mondelez International, and Kraft Heinz. [...] Fast food groups like McDonald's, Burger King, and KFC owner Yum Brands could also face shrinking or shifting demand."*



## The power of branding

What "delivers both a sense of unexpectedness and humanity" and captures the company's "caring, human nature"? What "represents the openness of our brand and the connections we make to bring our purpose to life"?

Per the company itself — seriously — all that is accomplished by Johnson & Johnson's new logo, which does away with its famous cursive for a standard sans-serif font, and replaces the ampersand with ... a different ampersand.

**Johnson&Johnson**

## Prize-winning research

A hearty GPhA Buzz congratulations to the team of UC Irvine researchers who won the 2023 Ig Nobel Prize in medicine for their paper, "The Quantification and Measurement of Nasal Hairs in a Cadaveric Population," i.e., "using cadavers to explore whether there is an equal number of hairs in each of a person's two nostrils."

## Captain Obvious sticks to the occasional half-caff

"Young adults' simultaneous use of alcohol and marijuana linked to more negative consequences"  
— Research Society on Alcoholism




# Pharmacy is our legacy.

“My name is Ana McLean, and I am a student pharmacist at the University of Georgia. I plan to pursue a residency in ambulatory care once I graduate. I am honored to have been selected to receive The Regina Baird Scholarship.”

—Ana McLean,  
Student Pharmacist at  
University of Georgia  
College of Pharmacy



**Pharmacy is our  
Legacy** 



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**Georgia Pharmacy**  
ASSOCIATION

6065 Barfield Road NE | Suite 100  
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# AIP Members Get It

## Benefits

- Advocacy is our primary membership pillar. Members are represented by two lobbyists at the State Capitol every day during session, fighting for you, on issues that impact your business.
- Audits can be the nightmare of independent pharmacy, and we know independents get audited more frequently than chains. Audits can be expensive and they are far from transparent. We have resources to provide audit assistance and teach best practices that saved members more than \$1.6 million in the past five years.

## Resources

- We have an experienced team that can help with audits, MAC appeals, and buying/selling a pharmacy.
- We negotiated discounts on pharmacy services, like business, workers' compensation, liability, and group-health insurance, as well as investment guidance.
- Our 3 Member Service Representatives keep you informed and are there to provide quick responses to your questions.

## Connections

- You will have an instant network of innovative independents throughout the state, sharing knowledge and best practices.
- Our partnerships with front-end suppliers, like over-the-counter products, DME, and nutritional supplements, will save you money on great products.
- You will have the opportunity to learn and network with like-minded professionals at meetings, special events, and the Georgia Pharmacy Convention. The connections you make are invaluable.

For more information, visit [GPhA.org](http://GPhA.org) or call/email Jonathan Marquess, PharmD, CDCES, FAPhA, GPhA VP of AIP (404) 419-8103, [jmarquess@gpha.org](mailto:jmarquess@gpha.org)



With AIP, **independent** never means **alone**.