

# Georgia Pharmacy<sup>®</sup>

April/May 2020

**Inside:**

**2020  
CONVENTION  
PREVIEW**

**WELCOME  
PRESIDENT-  
ELECT MAHLON  
DAVIDSON**

**STUDENT  
PHARMACISTS  
AT THE DOME**

# 2020 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**With the session suspended,  
here's a look at where Georgia's pharmacy  
legislation stands today**

Pharmacy Insurance

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IMAGINE THAT.



TOMORROW. IMAGINE THAT.

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This year's legislative session was cut short by the coronavirus, but a lot of work was done before lawmakers went home. Greg Reybold explains our priority legislation, and where all the healthcare bills stand.



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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.**

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From the CEO

# Uncertain times



BOB COLEMAN

First, let me admit, I'm always late getting my Prescript column into our editor, Andrew Kantor. That's both good and bad. It's bad for him because he's always trying to figure out what I'm going to say, how that topic fits in with the magazine (or doesn't!) and I usually run

long, so he usually has to edit out a sentence or two to make it fit the page (more like a paragraph!)

It's good for me, because usually something has changed, an event has happened, or something has come up that I'd rather write about that is more timely than when we started the process of putting the magazine together. This time I was about 85% through writing this when the world changed with the spread of CoviD-19. So, that Prescript went into a digital folder for another day, and I started over.

Much has been written about the virus and the impact on the day-to-day lives of people across the globe. Schools, business, churches, and governments have either shut down or have had to make adjustments to help stem the spread of the virus. Just yesterday, I asked our staff to work from home, and we restricted the travel of our member services representatives. And while we've had to make adjustments in our normal operations, rest assured we're still here doing the business of advocating, educating, and providing news and information for our membership.

Perhaps our biggest adjustments are in our efforts to promote engagement among the membership. Without a crystal ball, we and our partners are having to look at the future on a day-by-day basis. Because the situation is extremely fluid and changing often, please look to GPhA Buzz, e-mails, and the GPhA website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed site for the most up to date information on member gatherings.

In the meantime, our advocacy efforts have shifted to educating legislators and emergency preparedness staff related to the value and

assistance that pharmacists can bring during this crisis. I don't have to tell you that pharmacists are on the front line of healthcare, and if there ever was a time to allow pharmacists to operate at the top of their license, it is certainly now.

## Switching gears...

Our efforts during this year's assembly had been going very well. HB 946, HB 947, SB 313, and HB 918 have been moving forward. I can't express how important your emails, personal contacts, and phone calls to your representatives and senators are in this process. Thank you and know we are so grateful to have such an engaged membership. And, a special thank you to all our student pharmacists, from South, Mercer, UGA, and PCOM. This year's Day at the Dome was a huge success and I don't believe I've ever seen so many elected representative on the rope line talking to student pharmacists. We are hopeful when the assembly reconvenes, we will be able to take up where we left off with our efforts.

We also want to again welcome WellStar pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to the GPhA family. We couldn't be more excited to have you and look forward to getting to know you better in the future. And thank you to Snehal Doshi and the leadership at WellStar for your forward thinking and dedication to the profession.

Lastly, and sadly, we are saying aloha to our friend and editor, Andrew Kantor at the end of March. This will be his last issue as editor of *Georgia Pharmacy* magazine. Andrew's personality and sense of humor are all over the magazine and GPhA Buzz and will be dearly missed. We thank him for our daily smiles and wish him well in his new adventure. [📧](#)

*Bob Coleman is chief executive officer of the Georgia Pharmacy Association.*

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Welcome WellStar pharmacists and pharmacy technicians! We're thrilled to have you as part of the GPhA family — check out page 21 for a guide to getting started with your GPhA membership!

**John Bowen;** Metter  
**Sewalem Mebrate;** Alpharetta  
**Areej Obaid;** Norcross  
**Hemangi Shah;** Warwick, N.Y.  
**Faith Thiongo;** Kennesaw

## Academy of Clinical and Health-System Pharmacists

**Artecia Bailey;** Lawrenceville  
**Cindy Dyer;** Clarkesville  
**Anna Lee Faulk;** Jeffersonville  
**Chris Haire;** Albany  
**Lakisha Hamilton;** Marietta  
**Christi Heys;** Atlanta  
**Valerie Hudgins;** Birmingham, Ala.  
**Scott McAuley;** Atlanta  
**Teresa Wilkerson;** Upatoi

**Academy of Employee Pharmacists**  
**Audrey Amolegbe;** Duluth  
**Melissa Bach;** Snellville  
**Tim Brown;** Athens  
**Jerica Brown;** Augusta  
**Connie Butler;** Whigham  
**Jitendra Chaudhari;** Austell  
**Amy Covin;** Atlanta  
**Diana Damon;** Albany  
**Marshall Frost;** Evans  
**Sandi Harris;** Woodstock  
**Zachary Hobby;** Pooler  
**Oluchi Ike;** Grayson  
**Ashley King;** Pooler  
**Tsion Mengesha;** Stone Mountain  
**Brian Mitchem;** Pembroke  
**Abiola Oguntunmbi;** Richmond Hill

**Petronilla Okere;** Atlanta  
**Meghaben Patel;** Saginaw, Mich.  
**Megan Wright;** Byron

## Academy of Pharmacy Technicians

**Lori Griffith;** Nashville  
**Debbie Hamlin;** White  
**Denise Haygood;** Canton  
**Monica Johnson;** Rincon  
**Saeed Raees;** Johns Creek  
**Audriana Smith;** Albany  
**Sydney Tyson;** Lenox  
**Arlene Wade;** Hogansville  
**Alisha Warren;** Lenox



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!

### SILVER LEVEL

**Frank Barnett;** Nashville  
**Kathy McMillan;** Rincon  
**Tsion Mengesha;** Stone Mountain  
**Kelly Smith;** Athens  
**Laura (Gena) Tyson;** Lenox

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# SHOUT-OUTS

## GPhAERS IN THE NEWS

GPhA member and pharmacy owner **Scottie Barton** was interviewed in the Gainesville *Times* about how quickly Georgia pharmacies have run out of face masks and hand sanitizers as residents panic over the coronavirus.

**Ben Ross**, had his story featured in UGA Today, which spotlights UGA grads giving back to their communities. “When you own an independent pharmacy, it’s so much more than a business,” he said. “Your customers are your family. You want to make sure they are taken care of.”



**Will Crowley**, GPhA member and owner of Crowley Drug Company in Calhoun got a great write-up in the Calhoun Times as he’s about to celebrate his fifth year as an independent pharmacist. Congrats, Will! He experienced the corporate environment during his internship with a Kroger pharmacy,



but his interactions with staff and customers there served as a building block for eventually establishing his own business. “I had wonderful people to mentor me,” he recalled. “Even for a chain pharmacy, it felt very similar to an independent one, but I always wanted my own pharmacy.”

## Send your techs to



A one-day CE and social program  
by GPhA pharmacy techs  
for GPhA pharmacy techs.

**Saturday, October 24**

Just \$30 for GPhA members  
\$50 for non-members\*

including lunch and an afternoon at Topgolf!

Visit [GPhA.org/techu](https://GPhA.org/techu) for info and to sign up!

\* includes a GPhA membership!

## SO LONG, FAREWELL, ADIEU



With this issue of Georgia Pharmacy we say goodbye to

GPhA’s communications director, one **Andrew Kantor**, who is leaving GPhA to pursue what we assume are greener pastures\*.

As he is writing this himself, it would seem oddly self-serving to wish him the best, so we’ll — that is, I’ll — leave it at this: It’s been a wonderful 5+ years working with the amazing staff, members, volunteers, and partners that make up GPhA (with one obvious exception). I wish all of them — all of you — the best.

Until we meet again: Good night, and good luck.

\* Possibly involving alpacas

## SHOUT OUT TO ... A LOT OF FOLKS

**GPhA members came through in a huge way:** We asked for your help for the Arkansas Pharmacy Association and NCPA, which are filing an *amicus* brief with the U.S. Supreme Court. The issue is state regulation of PBMs, and the result will have immediate and tremendous impact across every pharmacy practice area.

Filing an *amicus* brief is expensive, so GPhA pledged to match dollar for dollar up to the first \$2,500 donated by GPhA members. The goal was to raise \$5,000 to help our Arkansas and NCPA colleagues.

In fact, donations from GPhA members and GPhA reached just shy of \$10,000: \$7,305 from members, plus a \$2,500 match from GPhA, making our total donation an incredible \$9,805 — almost double the original goal set for the campaign!

“While GPhA members are known for their generosity, I was in shock when I saw the final number,” GPhA CEO Bob Coleman said. “I never expected that we would almost double the goal set for the campaign. Time and time again, GPhA members step up when asked, and I could not be prouder or more grateful to them for their support in this fight against the heinous practices of PBMs.”

Arguments will be heard in the U.S. Supreme Court in late April, with a ruling expected in mid to late June. For more information on the appeal, **visit [GPhA.org/erisa](https://www.gpha.org/erisa)**.

## DAVIDSON TO BE 2021-22 GPhA PRESIDENT



Mahlon Davidson

Covington pharmacist Mahlon Davidson was named president-elect of the Georgia Pharmacy Association for the 2021-2022 association year. He'll take the reins as president in June, 2021.

“For 34 years, I have had the pleasure of being a member of America's strongest state pharmacy association,” said Davidson, who lives in Oxford. “This is now my opportunity to give back to the profession and to my fellow pharmacists by serving as an advocate, and an energetic representative of our rapidly changing professional environments.”

### Quick facts:

- Davidson received his PharmD from the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy in 1982.
- He's been a GPhA member since 1985.
- He has served as a pharmacist in the Covington and Conyers communities for the past three decades.
- He has been at the Covington Kroger's pharmacy for the past 20 years.
- A founding member of the Academy of Employee Pharmacists, he was named AEP's 2003 Pharmacist of the Year.

Said GPhA CEO Bob Coleman, “Mahlon is a perfect choice to continue the line of GPhA volunteer leaders — he's demonstrated time and again a strong commitment to his community and his patients. I look forward to working with him to improve healthcare choices and quality of life for everyone in Georgia.”

## AZZOLIN NAMED TO PHARMACY BOARD

Congrats to **Michael Azzolin**, GPhA member and CEO of PharmD on Demand, who was named by Governor Kemp as one of the eight members of the Georgia Board of Pharmacy. Extra: Michael also serves on the board of the Georgia Pharmacy Foundation!



**TOMORROW.  
IMAGINE THAT.**

# STUDENT PHARMACISTS AT THE GOLD DOME

Student pharmacists from all four of Georgia's pharmacy colleges spent a day each at the state capitol as part of GPhA's annual Day at the Dome events.

More than 400 students from the four schools got a look behind the scenes of our advocacy efforts with a briefing from GPhA staff and some pharmacy-champ legislators before setting out to do some lobbying of their own about the critical bills coming up in this year's session.



Before social distancing: UGA and PCOM student pharmacists pose after a day of meeting legislators



Student pharmacists give their message to Senator Frank Ginn



As the sun rises, students prepare to head to the Gold Dome to lobby for pharmacy



Mercer and South students pose in the capitol after their Day at the Dome



UGA students knew the drill: Smile!



## STUDENT UPDATES

### MERCER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

Each year, American Pharmacist Association Academy of Student Pharmacists challenges individual chapters to raise money for the APhA PAC in a competition called the APhA-ASP Back the PAC Campaign. Schools are divided into divisions based on the number of students and are challenged to raise the most money within their division. Students at Mercer University College of Pharmacy look forward to this campaign each year, planning a variety of fundraising events.

Mercer's biggest and most successful fundraiser this year was their "Tees To Dye For" fundraiser. Policy Vice President Anna Green designed and sold white Mercer t-shirts and planned a tie dye event on campus. All tie dye supplies were provided, and students came out and created their own original tie-dye design! This event was a fun way for Mercer students to raise money for the APhA PAC and provided a distraction from the rainy winter weather and studying.

Mercer students and faculty were also encouraged to participate in a Faculty Fun Fact Bingo Game as a fundraiser for the APhA PAC and as a way for students to get to know and connect with professors. Faculty submitted fun facts about themselves and students purchased bingo cards with these fun facts. The first student to match all of the fun facts with the corresponding professor won a gift card!

The Back the PAC Campaign occurs each year from the second week of January to the



Mercer student pharmacist Seth Harrison at the school's "Tees To Dye For" fundraiser

second week of March. Donations can also be made online by any APhA member and can be credited to any pharmacy school as a part of the campaign. Winners are announced each year at APhA's annual meeting. The APhA-ASP Back the PAC Campaign is an exciting and challenging way to get students involved in advocacy.

—Anna Green

### PCOM SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

February was American Heart Month, and to raise awareness about heart health, our Opera-

tion Heart Chairperson, Ashley Butts, organized a week of engaging activities in order to educate and promote healthy habits and lifestyles. Our APhA-ASP chapter kicked off the month by fundraising for American Heart Month with our first annual Winter Wonderland Raffle sale.

Students who donated had a chance to enter in a raffle to win a "Winter Wonderland" basket for giving back to a great cause. During the same week, our chapter provided students with healthy snacks after their classes and exams, as well as hosting a line dancing lesson for students to have fun, while reducing stress. According to the CDC, half of all Americans have at least one of the top three factors for heart disease – high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or smoking. By managing stress and eating healthy, it can help lower the risk of heart disease.

On National Wear Red Day, which is celebrated on the first Friday of February, members of our APhA-ASP chapter wore red, and encouraged others to do the same to bring awareness of heart disease by passing out



PCOM students celebrate National Wear Red Day in support of heart-healthy choices

## STUDENT UPDATES

red treats, along with brochures with facts about heart health, and the importance of being heart healthy. Although American Heart Month is a designated time to remind us to focus on our hearts, we encourage everyone and their families, friends, and the community, to promote good health and well-being in their everyday lives.

—*Laura Nguyen*

### SOUTH UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

On February 13, South University Pharmacy Students had the pleasure of attending a Georgia Pharmacy Foundation (GPhF)-sponsored Lunch-'N'-Learn on financial success with Mike Tarrant of Integrated Financial Group. Also in attendance was GPhF Chairman Jim Bartling, who discussed the foundation's initiatives and the importance of student engagement.

Mike spoke with students about the steps to becoming financially successful upon graduating, repaying student loans, and building wealth for the future. Pharmacy students from both the class of 2021 and 2022 were able to enjoy a delicious Chick-Fil-A meal while Mike explained the different student loan repayment options and how to tackle the tremendous student loan debt so many students are faced with.

The students were thankful to GPhA and GPhF for hosting the Lunch-N-Learn and to Mike for taking time out of his day to come speak with us. South University School of Pharmacy looks forward to hosting Mike again as well as other initiatives by GPhF. —

*Amanda Bass and Garrett Streat*



South University School of Pharmacy Class of 2021 and 2022 members at the Lunch-'N'-Learn

### GEORGIA STUDENTS PHARMACISTS APPOINTED TO NATIONAL APhA-ASP POSITIONS

The American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists appoints students to national standing committees each year, and this year three student pharmacists from Georgia have been selected for these national positions.

**Anna Green**, a P3 at Mercer University College of Pharmacy, has been appointed to be the chair of the Policy Standing Committee. Anna has served as the policy vice president for the Mercer chapter of APhA-ASP for the past year and is an active advocate on both the state and national levels for the profession of pharmacy.

**Savannah Cunningham**, a P2 at Mercer University College of Pharmacy, has been appointed as a member of the Communications Standing Committee. Savannah has served as the executive director of the GPhA Student Leadership Board and as the president-elect of the Mercer chapter of APhA-ASP.

**Becca Bruning**, a P3 at UGA, has been appointed as a member of the Awards Standing Committee. Becca has served as a member of the GPhA Student Leadership Board and as the President of the UGA chapter of APhA-ASP for the past year, she is actively involved in both organizations.

## UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

The University of Georgia's largest student-run organization, UGA Miracle, supports Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, our local Children's Miracle Network Hospital. As Children's largest academic donor, they have funded resources for the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit and the Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center.

In addition to their financial contributions, UGA Miracle supports local families impacted by pediatric illness by hosting kid-friendly events throughout the year and assisting parents through their Family Relations Committee.

UGA Miracle ends its fundraising year in February with their capstone event, Dance Marathon. This is a 24-hour fundraiser where thousands of students gather to support this cause and hear from UGA Miracle Families. Championed by the Student Society of Pediatric Advocates, the UGA College of Pharmacy fundraised for UGA Miracle over several weeks this winter. Nine of the college's professional organizations competed to see who could fundraise the most before the entire sum was donated at UGA Miracle's Dance Marathon.

The College of Pharmacy raised just over \$3,300 this year, ranking as the largest non-Greek organization donor at this year's Dance Marathon. APhA-ASP presented pediatric healthcare education at the event with volunteers from Operation Immunization and OTC Medication Safety.

In total, UGA Miracle's Dance

## BACK THE PAC — AND BE TRUE TO YOUR SCHOOL

Each year, APhA challenges student pharmacists to get involved in advocacy through the Back the PAC Campaign. APhA-ASP chapters are challenged to fundraise money for the APhA PAC. Mercer, PCOM, South, and UGA have been working hard to fundraise for this campaign.

At the APhA Annual Meeting, the school that fundraises the most overall will be awarded a \$500 gift card for their APhA chapter, while schools in each division that fundraise the most for their division will be awarded a \$100 gift card.

**If you're an APhA member interested in helping these schools reach their goals** by contributing to the APhA PAC, contact your school APhA-ASP representative.

Be sure to credit a school with your donation so it gets credit and is added to their total for the Back the PAC Campaign!




Marathon raised more than \$1.25 million for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The College of Pharmacy is proud to partner with

students across the University of Georgia to support children in need in the state of Georgia.

— *Kayleigh Greene*

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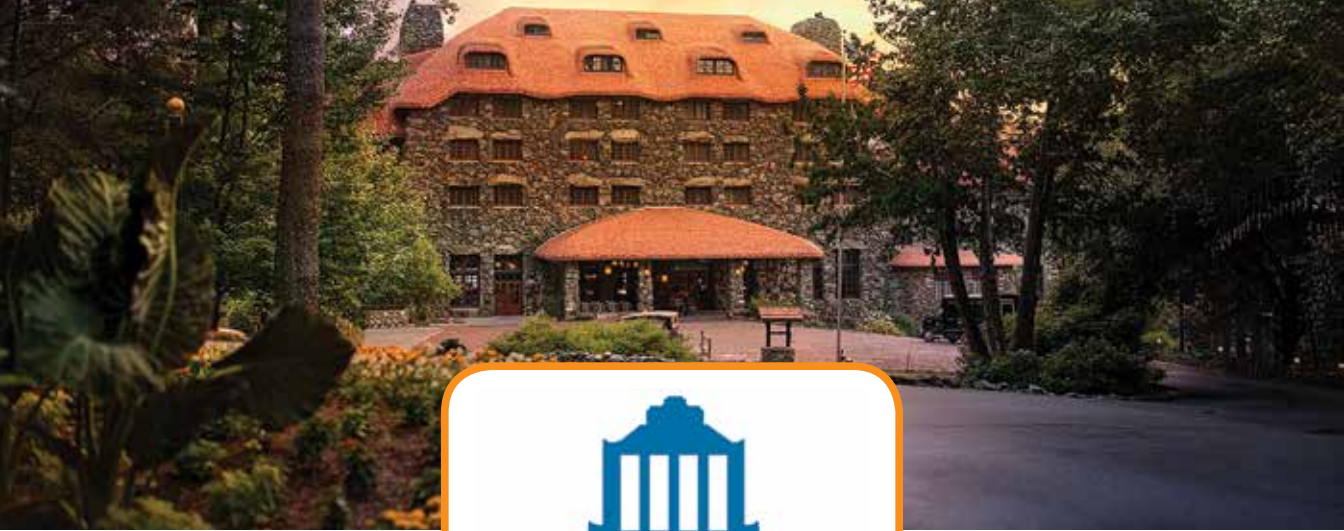
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## The Georgia Pharmacy Convention is the biggest gathering of Georgia's pharmacy professionals all year.

Hundreds of pharmacists, pharmacy owners, technicians, and students from across Georgia will come to Asheville to grow, play, and connect.

Be sure to check out all the courses and events — and the ways to have fun.

### Miss America

Don't miss Friday's blockbuster keynote **Camille Schrier** — Miss America 2020, and a student pharmacist at Virginia Commonwealth University!



### CPE and more CPE

**Bottom line:** You can easily acquire 12-14 hours of continuing ed credits from the more than 30 hours to choose from. And it's on the topics you want and need — we know because we asked.

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# What's Happening

## THURSDAY, JUNE 18

**General session and opening keynote:**  
10:15 am

**Expo Hall grand opening celebration:**  
3:00 to 6:00 pm

**Georgia Pharmacy Foundation Wine Toss:** 3:00 to 6:00 pm

**UGA and Mercer alumni dinners**

### CPE COURSES

**Chronic Heart Failure: Optimizing Treatment, Avoiding Hospitalizations**  
Presented by Sweta Patel

### Annual Law Update

Presented by Greg Reybold, General Counsel & VP of Public Policy, Georgia Pharmacy Association

**Hypercholesterolemia: Medications and Goals of Therapy**  
Presented by Lydia Newsome

**Practical Considerations for Improving Medication Therapy As Patients Transition through the Healthcare System**

Presented by Anthony Hawkins and Lydia Newsom

**Antioxidant effects of foods and beverages: A Scientific Approach**  
Presented by Shirin Madzhidova

**Developing a Business Plan & Performance Improvement for the Community Setting**

## GINGERBRX

The Georgia Pharmacy Foundation invites you to join our first ever gingerbread-pharmacy-building competition!

This fun-filled, family-friendly opportunity is open Saturday, June 20 to everyone attending the convention — plus families, friends, guests, and anyone you invite to your team.

Compete to build the most amazing gingerbread pharmacy you've ever seen. All proceeds go to the Georgia Pharmacy Foundation ... except the gingerbread.

Sign up: [GPhAconvention.com/gingerbrx](http://GPhAconvention.com/gingerbrx)



## PRESIDENT'S BASH

Saturday, June 20, 7:00 - 11:00 p.m.

Food, friends, music, dancing, drinks, and more — what's not to love?  
Bring the family and enjoy the incredible Universal Crush!



## FRIDAY, JUNE 19

**General session and keynote featuring Miss America, Camille Schrier:**  
1:45 pm (see box)

**Expo Hall open:** 4:00 to 6:00 pm

**Georgia Pharmacy Foundation Draw Down:** 5:15 to 6:00 pm

**Student and Student Sponsor Reception:**  
6:00 to 6:30pm

**PharmPAC Investors Reception:** 6:30 to 7:30 pm (\$250 minimum investment)

### CPE COURSES

**Practice Transformation: Flip the Pharmacy**  
Presented by Erin Dalton

## Annual Bloodborne Pathogen and OSHA Update

Presented by Christine Klein

## Strategies of Effective Pharmacy Leaders

Presented by Greg Alston

## Pharmacy Work-Life Balance

Presented by Greg Alston

## Snap, Crackle, Pop!: Solutions for Quieting Creaky Joints

Presented by Sharmon P. Osae

## Practice Transformation: Efficient Pharmacy Workflow

Presented by Ashley Hannings

## Asthma Guideline Update: A breath of fresh air

Presented by Rebecca Stone

## Practice Transformation: Integrating Continuous Clinical Monitoring into Practice

Presented by Olivia Steltenpohl

## Pharmacogenetics Panel

Moderated by Andi McKeever; panelists include Kenric Ware and Olivia Bentley

## SATURDAY, JUNE 20

## General Membership Meeting and General Session: 10:15 am to 12:30 pm

## Practice-academy lunches: 12:30 to 1:45 pm

## Georgia Pharmacy Foundation GingerBrx Gingerbread Pharmacy competition: 5:00 to 6:30 pm (see box)

## President's Bash: 7:00 to 11:00 pm (see box)

## CPE COURSES

**Polypharmacy: Strategies for Identifying and Tapering Medications**  
Presented by Susan Miller and Christine Klein

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

### At the resort

- Restaurants, lounges, cafés, and the famous Elaine's Dueling Piano Bar
- Want something a bit out of the box? Find your own food with the "No Taste Like Home" Wild Food Foraging Tour
- 18 holes of golf, including a full pro shop and instruction
- An indoor tennis center with clinics for adults and kids
- On-the-grounds subterranean spa (voted one of the "Top Resort Spas in the U.S." by Condé Nast Traveler), plus pools, a sports complex, and walking trails

### Right nearby

- The Biltmore Estate
- Little Switzerland ("The flag is a big plus")
- Art, music, and microbreweries — some not so "micro" ... like the Funkatorium
- Golf, tennis, even pickleball
- Galleries, shopping, arcades, and a whole town to explore

## Pharmacognosy: Drug Origin from Natural Sources

## Unicorns and Dinosaurs: A quick refresher on old anti-infectives with new purpose

## Therapeutic considerations in menopause

Presented by Jennifer Elliott

## Review of Pharmacist in Charge Responsibilities

Presented by Mahlon Davidson

## Diabetes MTM: Best Practices for the community setting — a review of diabetes guidelines & medications

Presented by Jonathan G. Marquess

## Exploring the Pharmacist's Role: How are states increasing patient access to hormonal contraception and PrEP?

Presented by Rebecca Stone

## New Drug Update

Presented by Ashish Advani

## Update and Review of vaccine protocol administration requirements

Presented by Johnathan Hamrick

## Practice Updates from the Board of Pharmacy and GDNA

Moderated by Greg Reybold, General Counsel & VP of Public Policy, Georgia Pharmacy Association

## SUNDAY, JUNE 21

## CPE COURSES

### Probiotic considerations

Presented by Shirin Madzhidova

## FOCUS! An Evidence-Based Approach to ADHD Management

Presented by Renad Abu-Sawwa



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

## A SESSION IN LIMBO

BY GREG REYBOLD

**A**s of this publication, the Georgia General Assembly has suspended the 2020 legislative session as a precaution in light of Covid-19, with a stated intention of reconvening for the session's remaining days. While legislative session remains incomplete, the General Assembly managed to make it through crossover day prior to suspending the session. Crossover day is the last day a bill may crossover from its originating chamber and continue to be viable.

### **PBM REFORM, PATIENT CHOICE AND PROTECTION, CARVE-OUT, AND TRANSPARENCY**

The practices of pharmacy benefits managers (PBMs) and Medicaid managed care companies (CMOs) have garnered significant attention this legislative session, and deservedly so in our opinion. Just prior to the kickoff of the 2020 legislative session a meeting was convened on January 7 with the House Insurance Committee and the Special Committee on Access to Quality Healthcare.

The joint committees heard testimony from pharmacists, physicians, and their patients who courageously shared their experiences in dealing with practices of PBMs and CMOs and the impact of those practices on patient care. The hearing garnered significant attention and positive feedback and served to create substantial momentum in the weeks to come.

Once session began, it did not take long for things

to heat up with several pieces of legislation supported by GPhA being introduced and, thankfully, crossing out of their originating chamber where they wait to be taken up once session reconvenes.

### **SB 313 & HB 796: PBM REGULATION**

Introduced by Senator Dean Burke and Representative Knight respectively, these two bills faced fierce resistance via committee fights in both the Senate and the House in which testimony was proffered by PBM and insurer interests — which was then countered by testimony offered from not only GPhA, but also a strong coalition including the Medical Association of Georgia, the National MS Society, the Georgia Society of Clinical Oncology, pharmacists, and the Rx in Reach Coalition, which is a patient advocacy group. GPhA and several other groups also utilized member outreach to ensure legislators were aware of just how needed and important this legislation is. These bills, in their current form, seek to, amongst other things:

- Do a much-needed update to existing provisions including definitions;
- Increase the commissioner of insurance's authority and ability to audit and investigate PBM practices, and to fine for violations;
- Remove exemptions for Medicaid managed care;
- Require PBMs to file quarterly reports with the commissioner which shall be available to the pub-

lic identifying claims reimbursed 10 percent above and 10 percent below national drug acquisition cost.

- Prohibit PBMs from tying the reimbursement of a drug to patient outcomes;
- Prohibit deriving revenue from patients and network pharmacies including retroactive recoupments;
- Impose requirements with regard to rebates;
- Impose requirements with regard to spread pricing;
- Prohibit copay accumulator practices;
- Prohibit removing coverage for a drug for the purpose of incentivizing a patient to seek coverage from a different plan;
- Prohibit withholding coverage or requiring a prior authorization for a generic;
- Strengthen anti-steering provisions passed into law last year; and
- Impose a 10 percent surcharge on PBMs and their insurer clients on all claims administered in the state of Georgia when a PBM engages in patient steering or imposes retroactive fees.

In the Senate, SB 313 was assigned to the Insurance & Labor Committee and was subsequently assigned to a subcommittee. There were several hours of testimony and a substitute introduced but it ultimately passed out of Insurance & Labor unanimously and passed on the senate floor with a friendly amendment unanimously.

On the House side, HB 946 was favorably reported via substitute by the Special Committee on Access to Quality Healthcare with a unanimous vote and passed the House near unanimously.

## **HB 918: AUDITS & PATIENT STEERING**

Introduced by Rep. Sharon Cooper, this bill strengthens Georgia's Pharmacy Audit Bill of Rights and strengthen the Pharmacy Anti-Steering Act passed into law last year via HB 233. Specifically, this bill looks to:

- Remove language in the law being relied upon by DCH to allow steering in the state health benefit plan;
- Update the Pharmacy Audit Bill of Rights to increase commissioner of insurance authority and limit PBM recoupments from pharmacies to situations when there has been fraud; a mis-fill; or an overpayment; and

- Strengthen Georgia's anti-steering law by prohibiting PBMs from steering via monetary penalties including withholding coverage; prohibiting PBM to PBM pharmacy referral arrangements; and apply steering protections to patients who receive limited distribution drugs and to patients in Medicaid managed care.

This bill was favorably reported by the House Special Committee on Access to Quality Healthcare and passed the House unanimously.

## **HB 947: MEDICAID MANAGED CARE STUDY OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG CARVE-OUT**

Representative Knight's HB 947 cuts to the core of GPhAs 2020 legislative priority of bringing transparency to the Medicaid managed care prescription drug market. This bill begins by setting forth some of the many problems in prescription drug administration in Georgia's Medicaid managed care program including poor outcomes, self-dealing, and high administrative costs.

It then looks to tackle these problems by tasking the Department of Community Health with conducting an actuarial study: How much could the state save by carving prescription drugs out of Medicaid managed care and having those benefits administered in Georgia's Medicaid fee-for-service program? If the study reflects savings of \$20 million or more, DCH will proceed with a carve out to implemented by July 2021. If the savings are between \$10 million and \$20 million DCH, is authorized to proceed with a carve out.

Several pharmacists testified in support of this legislation, including two who offered compelling testimony regarding their experience with Medicaid managed care and their stores' recent closures.

(As an important aside, Georgia's mid-year budget was passed and signed by the governor via HB 792 which, amongst other things, contained \$175,000 for DCH to conduct that actuarial study.)

## **HB 991: HEALTHCARE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Introduced by Representative Hatchett, HB 991 looks to put an end to opaque practices and lack of transparency by CMOs, PBMs, and others contracted with state plans. It would create true transparency and oversight by creating the Healthcare Transparency and Accountability Oversight Committee, which will





## Caroline? Sweet!

In news that has reverberated throughout Georgia's government affairs community, GPhA has expanded its legislative team at the capitol by bringing on veteran lobbyist Caroline Womack to assist Greg Reybold and Cindy Shepherd.

Caroline is one of the foremost healthcare lobbyists at the Capitol and offers a unique perspective and expertise in that she represented PCMA, the PBM industry's trade association, for several years. The perspective, expertise, value, and work ethic she will bring to GPhA's advocacy efforts is something for all of us to be excited about.

have the authority to review conduct and performance of state health care plan contractors.

The committee would consist of a physician, a pharmacist, a consumer representative, as well as six members of the General Assembly. This committee would have the authority to request and review records including contracts and subcontracts; retain consultants; and make recommendations to applicable state departments and agencies, as well as to the General Assembly.

### OTHER BILLS THAT MADE CROSSOVER

#### **HB 759: Annual drug update**

This annual drug update bill seeks to keep current Georgia's dangerous drug and control substance code sections.

#### **HB 791: 90-day supply of maintenance meds**

This legislation would authorize a pharmacist to dispense up to a 90-day supply of a maintenance medication under certain conditions. This authorization would not extend to controlled substances.

#### **SB 272: Dextromethorphan sales to minors**

This bill would prohibit the sale to minors of over-the-counter drug products containing dextromethorphan.

#### **SB 372: Provisions relating to public health**

This bill would remove naloxone from the dangerous drug list when supplied by a distributor for purposes of drug overdose prevention. This is being done for the purpose of increasing naloxone availability to emergency responders by allowing them to access it from distributors directly.

#### **SB 391: Coverage for medication dispensed during declared emergencies**

This bill would require insurers to waive time restrictions on refills and reimburse pharmacies for 30 day supplies of prescription medications under certain conditions when a state of emergency has been de-

clared by the governor or there has been a hurricane warning issued by the National Weather Service.

#### **HB 888/SB 359: Surprise billing**

This legislation would provide certain consumer protections against surprise medical billing by requiring insurers and providers to take certain actions and provide certain information to consumers.

### BILLS THAT FAILED TO MAKE CROSSOVER

#### **HB 952: Corporate practice of pharmacy**

This bill would have restricted the corporate practice of pharmacy by prohibiting corporations that owned multiple pharmacies from implementing certain policies restricting the dispensing controlled substances. This bill was favorably reported by committee but did not receive a vote on the House floor.

#### **HB 1027: PBM rebates**

This bill initially would have required that PBMs pass back a set percentage of rebates received from drug manufacturers to patients at the point of sale. A substitute would have required PBMs to report the aggregate amounts of rebates that were passed back to patients at the point of sale. This bill was favorably reported by committee but did not receive a vote on the House floor.

#### **HB 128: PBM reform**

This legislation would have revised the PBM code to, amongst other things, increase Commissioner of Insurance oversight, impose a pharmacy reimbursement floor and mandatory dispensing fee, and establish a reimbursement appeals process.

#### **SB 427: Medicaid managed care study of prescription drug carve-out**

This was a companion bill to HB 947 as explained above. Because HB 947 moved along as planned, it was not necessary to advance this bill through the Senate and so no committee hearing was held. [G](#)

# INVESTING IN PHARMPAC IS INVESTING IN YOUR PRACTICE.

## 2020 PHARMPAC INVESTORS

The following pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, students, and others have joined GPhA's PharmPAC for the 2019 calendar year.

The contribution levels are based on investment through March 8, 2020.

### Diamond Investors (\$4,800 or \$400/month)



**RALPH BALCHIN**  
Fayetteville



**CHARLES BARNES**  
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**ROBERT DYKES**  
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### Platinum Investors (\$1,200 or \$100/month)

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**EUGENE MCDONALD**

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**OLA REFFELL**  
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**David Graves, Macon,**  
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# 2020 PHARMPAC INVESTORS

**HELP US REACH OUR GOAL FOR 2020!**

Visit [GPhA.org/PharmPAC](http://GPhA.org/PharmPAC) to find out more.



\*As of March 8, 2020

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

Nelson Anglin  
Michael Azzolin  
Claude Bates  
James Carpenter  
Michael Crooks  
Ed Dozier  
Marshall Frost

Hannah Head  
Joe Holt  
Jason Jones  
Susan Kane  
Laura Ko  
Willie Latch  
Michael Lewis  
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Yolanda Rivers  
Thomas Sherrer

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## Keep in touch

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### GPhA'S MEMBER SERVICE PARTNERS

#### Alliance for Patient Medication Safety

medicationsafety.org  
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#### InfiniTrak

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#### Pharmacy Technician Certification Board

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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

# The roads more traveled



CHRIS THURMOND

How long has it been since you went on a real road trip? Not just a long car ride from point “A” to point “B,” but a real road trip through towns with names like Zellobee, Mayhaw, Argyle, Gardi, Blundale, Almira, Eastanollee, Cohutta, Ascalon, Lyerly, Akes, or Roopville?

The State of Georgia is just shy of 60,000 square miles — quite a large swath of land — and trying to cover all of it can be a daunting task. But that’s exactly what your Georgia Pharmacy Association seeks to do on a daily basis. And in my never-to-be-humble opinion, it does an outstanding job representing member pharmacists from all practice settings all over this great state.

In order to cover this large area more efficiently, GPhA has divided those 60,000 square miles into 12 regions, a much more manageable area to cover. However, even with 12 regions, it may still take a couple of hours to drive from one side of a region to the other. Unfortunately, that is just the nature of living in the 24th largest state in the Union.

You may ask why I am discussing land mass and regions. GPhA Regional Presidents’ Briefings are on the horizon, and CEO Bob Coleman, VP of Legislative Affairs Greg Reybold, members of the GPhA Board of Directors, and GPhA staff will be out and about all over the state updating our members on the legislative landscape of the 2020 session.

You have already received several e-mail and/or fax updates, as 2020 will have many bills and issues that will impact every pharmacist and practice setting across the state. If you do not know which region you are in, the GPhA website ([GPhA.org/regions](http://GPhA.org/regions)) is a great place to both learn a little more about yourself and sign up for your local briefing.

**SOON AFTER CHRIS WROTE THIS COLUMN, THE WORLD CHANGED.**

**GPhA’s Spring Regional Presidents’ Briefings have since been postponed; we’re obviously keeping a close eye on when we’ll be able to reschedule them. Watch your e-mail and GPhA Buzz for info, and stay healthy! —ed.**

I understand that for some members the travel distance and/or travel time can be significant (remember, Georgia is very large). However, I would encourage each and every member to make it a priority to attend one of the region meetings; like the solstices, they only happen twice a year. Few people have a good excuse not to drive a little further than they would like just twice a year.

These meetings provide needed legal and legislative updates, as well as wonderful opportunities for fellowship and networking with colleagues in your area, including some you may not have met yet — and I know many of you could use some new friends. Or even better, you can become someone’s new friend, and who wouldn’t want to be your friend.

And if you want to complain about travel distance, I would remind you that Bob and Greg will be going to all 12 regions over the course of the year. I assure you that your drive will in no way compare to theirs, and heck, you get to have drinks and sit down and eat a great meal surrounded by great people. We need your attendance and we need your support. Remember, together we are better, together we are stronger. 📍

*Chris Thurmond is GPhA’s 2019–2020 president and owner of Village Drug Shop of Athens. Write to him at [vildrug@bellsouth.net](mailto:vildrug@bellsouth.net).*

## It took them 24 years

Boston University researchers have concluded a 24-year study of 1445 people and, after exhaustive research, concluded that, as the press release put it, "Healthy lifestyle reduces risk of disease, death." (The official title was "Association of the Duration of Ideal Cardiovascular Health Through Adulthood With Cardiometabolic Outcomes and Mortality.")



## Twizzlers are vegetarian

Greek researchers spent 10 years tracking more than 2,000 adults and have concluded that, while cutting meat from your diet is healthful, if you substitute junk food it pretty much negates the effect.

"[I]t seems that simply following a plant-based or vegetarian diet is not enough to reduce cardiovascular disease risk," said the lead author, Demosthenes Panagiotakos.

## Double-take

Headlines like this are a reminder that Georgia is also a country: "Georgia Pharmacy Association sends anti-COVID19 shipment to Iran."



## Good luck with that

The WHO has published guidelines for protecting your mental health these days.

#3: "Minimize watching, reading or listening to news that causes you to feel anxious or distressed."

# WELCOME

## WELLSTAR PHARMACISTS & PHARMACY TECHS

**We're thrilled to have you as part of the GPhA family.**



As a member, you'll enjoy a robust offering of benefits, from timely continuing education, networking opportunities, and the latest pharmacy news and information — not to mention our ongoing advocacy efforts on behalf of you and your patients!

### Keep up with our advocacy efforts

Be sure to read the weekly Legislative Update e-mail from Greg Reybold. He'll explain what's happening in the capitol and why it's important for pharmacists.

You'll also see calls for action — that's when we need you to reach out to your senators and representatives to add your voice to ours on a critical hearing or vote. These calls make a big difference! When 2,000 pharmacists call to support a bill, you can bet legislators take notice.

### Check out our education offerings

Our catalog of CPE courses — live and on-demand — is always growing, along with our certificate programs. Visit [GPhA.org/education](https://www.gpha.org/education) for the full list of webinars, courses, and other programs.

### Follow us on your favorite social media

Whether you're on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or LinkedIn, you'll find regular updates on GPhA and members like you. Friend us, like us, follow us: [@gphabuzz](https://www.instagram.com/gphabuzz)

### TAKE US FOR ALL WE'RE WORTH

Now that you're one of us, be sure to get the most out of your new GPhA membership!

### Get involved

Reach out to your region president, or to the members of your practice academy — it's a great way to get in touch with other GPhA members. Just go to [GPhA.org/regions](https://www.gpha.org/regions) to see what region you're in, and visit [GPhA.org/academies](https://www.gpha.org/academies) to read more about your practice academy!

### Watch your mailbox

You'll soon start receiving our bi-monthly magazine, Georgia Pharmacy. It's a great way to keep up with what GPhA is up to, and to read useful news and information for you and your practice, your practice academy!

### PILLARS OF VALUE

WE DIVIDE OUR MISSION  
INTO FOUR PILLARS:

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# AIP MEMBERS GET IT

## They get help

- ✓ Help working with Medicare and Medicaid
- ✓ Help with audit relief
- ✓ Help with MAC appeals
- ✓ Help buying and selling a pharmacy

## They get benefits

- ✓ Audit relief (AIP efforts saved members more than \$320,000)
- ✓ Services specifically for compounding pharmacies
- ✓ Free business consultations with pharmacy experts
- ✓ Access to the comprehensive AIP Pharmacy Manual, which offers extensive material about buying, selling, and managing a pharmacy — including information about regulatory issues and agencies

## They get connections

- ✓ Connections to other independent pharmacies throughout the state
- ✓ Partnerships with OTC and nutritional supplement companies
- ✓ A chance to learn and network at AIP's fall and spring statewide meetings
- ✓ Access to telehealth and chronic care management resources through CriticalKey

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

No other state association in the country has an organization like the Georgia Pharmacy Association's Academy of Independent Pharmacy. We are proud to represent our members and our profession!

