

## **BCPHA Award Nominee: Kyle Denley**

### **1. What are the nominee's qualities that make them an outstanding pharmacist:**

Honesty and generosity are the cornerstones of Kyle's practice. He demonstrates this quality by not only ensuring that patients understand their medications, but also by ensuring their medications are affordable. He goes out of his way to ensure patients understand the costs of their medications and that coverage or special authority is in place. Should patients be unable to afford their medication due to financial barriers, he will give away medications for free. This example is the reason why Kyle wanted to become a pharmacy owner. He never wanted finances to be the barrier preventing patients from receiving their medication. This transparency and demonstration of patient well-being above finances fosters trust and confidence in Kyle being an exceptional pharmacist.

Selflessness is another key trait that defines Kyle as an incredible person as well as pharmacist. He consistently goes above and beyond his duties to ensure patients receive the best possible care. An example of his selflessness comes from his willingness to be available. Patients, as well as nurses in our collaborative practice, have phoned him at all hours including 6am all the way until 12am. When asked why he doesn't turn his phone off after hours, his answer is always the same: "Because it might be important". And it has happened. OAT nurses have phoned requesting his knowledge of medications and patients have called late at 1130pm asking for their OAT to prevent them from going into withdrawal. His willingness to put others' needs before his own demonstrates his dedication to the well-being of those he serves and true care that one can exemplify when caring for others.

Lastly, as a friend, manager and fellow pharmacist, Kyle exemplifies loyalty. It's challenging to explain this particular trait as the magnitude is only shown through his everyday actions. To put it simply, Kyle cares. He has never denied any of us time off to take care of ourselves, our families or our lives. We have had family members pass away or family come from out of town. None of us ever worries that the time off would be denied and we all know that we are more than happy to take on the extra workload to support one another. This loyalty and care that he demonstrates is woven throughout each team member and makes it a joy to work with our "Pharmily" week after week.

### **2. How has the Nominee demonstrated excellence in pharmacy (e.g. patient care, leadership, mentorship, innovative practice, community involvement or collaborative care)? (required)**

Leadership in pharmacy is a crucial aspect that determines the success of a pharmacist in providing quality healthcare services to patients. Kyle has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills in the field of pharmacy, particularly in compassion and empathy towards individuals struggling with addiction. By embodying these traits, he has not only been able to provide excellent care to his patients but has also inspired his colleagues to adopt a similar approach in their practice. This was demonstrated to me when I first began working with this clientele. Coming from a fairly privileged background, I was easily frustrated and biased towards those with addictions. To be blunt, I was frustrated by their choice to continue their addictive cycles and use their welfare check toward purchasing street drugs. I felt justified in my beliefs, but it was Kyle who helped me see it from another angle. He told me stories of how the patients came to their situation. Patients often had decades of generational abuse, neglect and instability engulfing their lives. This helped me realize that their addictions aren't so much of a choice rather that it's their life and one of the ways that we can help is by treating them with compassion, empathy and support. It is in this embodiment of compassion and empathy that Kyle not only demonstrates leadership, but helps to instill it in others.

Collaborative care is another area where Kyle has shown excellence in pharmacy. He has established a strong working relationship with the Health Connections Clinic, a low-barrier healthcare facility that caters to patients with limited resources. Kyle engages in daily discussions with the clinic staff, ensuring that they are updated on the status of their patients. These conversations cover a wide range of topics, such as whether a patient has received their dose, if a patient is missing, or if a patient is at risk of overdose and needs to be reassessed. This collaborative approach ensures that patients are provided with different resources and that their needs are addressed promptly and effectively.

Kyle's dedication to his patients is best illustrated by his day-to-day activities. His morning routine begins at 7 am , seven days a week, when he witnesses the daily dispensed medications of OAT and psychiatric drugs for 30-40 patients. On routine days, he may return to the pharmacy at 10:30 pm, but on days when patients are experiencing difficulties or cannot be found, he returns closer to 11:30 pm. Unfortunately, these challenging days are becoming increasingly more common as patients suffer from overdoses or suffer from paranoia. Kyle administers naloxone when necessary, provides reassurance, and even offers food and companionship until the patient feels safe or another care provider can take over.

In addition to home visits, Kyle also travels to camp sites and other unconventional locations to deliver medications to patients who may not have a stable living situation. He makes multiple attempts to locate these patients, driven not by financial gain but by a genuine concern for their wellbeing as they endure the challenges of addictions. In some cases, this involves searching through wooded areas and calling out the names of patients who may be hiding due to paranoia or fear.

#### **4. How has the nominee demonstrated public and community service?**

Kyle consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to the public particularly for individuals who are often marginalized or overlooked by society. One contribution Kyle has made is that he may drive patients to their medical appointments. He recognizes that there is a gap in available services for patients to get to their appointments and sometimes he steps in to bridge that gap. One notable example of this is Kyle's care with BB. BB is a man who has been our patient for approximately three years. He lives at the Lookout Shelter and suffers from short-term memory loss due to a past overdose. This challenge is coupled with other conditions of paranoia and anxiety. Although BB has memory deficits, over time, Kyle has gained his trust and has become a reliable source of support for him. Kyle will often tell us stories of how he has asked BB to wait in order to bring him to his doctor's appointment only to note that BB forgot and left 5 minutes later. Then Kyle searches for BB again in order to bring him to the appointment necessary for his care. This dedication to ensuring that patients receive care, even if it means delaying his own work, demonstrates Kyle's commitment to his patients and the community.

Kyle's commitment to serving marginalized populations is further exemplified by his willingness to continue helping people, even in the face of potential danger. On his morning rounds, he once had a patient approach him with a used needle, but this has not deterred him from continuing to provide assistance to others in need. When asked on other occasions why he helps people, his answer is very logical. Because they're patients. He doesn't discriminate whether a patient is on OAT, has been belligerent or if the individual is intoxicated or high. He just cares about them because they're people in need of help.

Recently, a nurse practitioner called Kyle to ask if he would provide Paxlovid to a COVID-positive patient. The prescriber did not want the patient to go into pharmacies due to their positive status, and no other pharmacies would deliver the medication. The delivery location was a car parked behind a mall, which deterred others from providing this service, not to mention that many pharmacies do not carry Paxlovid. That included our pharmacy until Kyle received this call. Rather than stating that we didn't provide this service nor carry the medication, Kyle ordered the medication and personally delivered it to the patient's car. In fact, he does all deliveries that are potentially unusual or dangerous as he never wants his staff to feel unsafe.

#### **5. In what ways has the nominee advocated on behalf of pharmacists and the profession, and what has been the impact?**

Kyle is a pharmacist who has made a significant impact on the profession through his actions rather than direct advocacy. For instance, he dedicates extra time to ensure patients' medications are covered. Sometimes this has involved more than requesting that the patient ask their prescriber to apply for special authority. As many of our patients are homeless or have mental health challenges, they are often in need of more behind-the-scenes assistance. Many conversations often occur back and forth between prescribers and case managers in order for medications to be covered. Kyle has also contacted drug companies directly for financial aid and, should that or special authority be delayed, even covering the costs for those who cannot afford them. As patients are kept informed of the process as it unfolds, they end up gaining a new perspective and a felt sense of gratitude to the knowledge that pharmacists possess.

Additionally, Kyle has collaborated with the RCMP on many occasions. Sometimes he is in discussion with them regarding a patient who is detained in order to coordinate the provision of opioid agonist therapy while other occasions have been of a more hilarious manner. There have been a couple instances where Kyle has been pulled over by the police during his morning rounds while delivering OAT medications as neighbours have called 911 to report nefarious activity. While the pharmacy staff has had good laughs over this and Kyle is now listed as safe in the RCMP database, his dedication to providing care has no doubt been seen by the public and officials.