

THE Tablet

2024
EXCELLENCE IN
PHARMACY AWARDS

Congratulations to the 2024 award winners!

Join us in recognizing our
pharmacists in eight award
categories PAGE 6



British Columbia
Pharmacy Association
bcpharmacy.ca



PHARMASAVE®

FREEDOM + support

The Perfect Balance of Freedom And Support Means Closer Connections For Your Patients And Your Team

Joining Pharmasave as an owner or valued member of an established pharmacy team means you have the benefit of independent ownership and also have access to an abundance of professional tools, resources and support when you need it, including

- ✓ turn-key pharmacy programs
- ✓ best-in-class pharmacy operations guidance
- ✓ member networking opportunities
- ✓ regional support for industry challenges like staffing recruitment
- ✓ human resources & training

With the most comprehensive programs and support of any banner program in Canada, you'll have the flexibility to focus on what matters most to you, and time to build closer connections with your patients and your pharmacy team.

Scan To Find Out More

Visit ownership.pharmasave.com
or contact us today!



Linda Kawasaki, West Region Manager,
Business Development
Direct: 604.812.3610
lkawasaki@pharmasavewest.ca

Join an
award-winning
network of pharmacy
professionals

2024 Pharmacy Excellence New Practitioner Award

Jasdeep Bahniwal, Pharmacy Manager at Pharmasave Penticton Regional Hospital is being honoured after just 3 years in the industry with the 2024 Pharmacy Excellence New Practitioner Award for his exceptional patient care and collaboration with local healthcare professionals. Bahniwal's nomination came from the very hospital doctor's he continues to build relationships with every day.

Recognition for his dedication and compassion to go above and beyond for his patients and neighbours, providing the best possible care so early in his career is an inspiration. The Pharmasave community is honoured to have Jasdeep and thank him for continuing to exemplify genuine care as a **Pharmasave** community pharmacist.

Congratulations!



Contents

- 7 Collaborative Care Award**
Graeme Hill As the son of two pharmacists, including a father who served as associate dean for external affairs at the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, this long-term care pharmacist was naturally drawn to pursue chemistry and biology in his undergraduate studies.
- 8 New Practitioner Award**
Jas Bahniwal This pharmacist got his start as an assistant while completing his undergraduate degree in university. He now works as pharmacy manager at the community pharmacy located within the Penticton Regional Hospital itself, Pharmasave #1028.
- 10 Excellence in Patient Care Award**
Ron Najibnia A chance decision to come to British Columbia to meet friends and family more than 20 years ago changed this pharmacist's career trajectory. Now, he's a leader in the profession.
- 13 Murray Dykeman Mentorship Award**
Megan St. John She's the most junior pharmacist in the 46-year history of her pharmacy banner to become manager so soon after graduation. In the four years since she graduated, this pharmacist has certainly made her mark as a rising star.
- 15 Apotex Inc. Future British Columbia Pharmacy Leader Award**
Ilianna Doornbos Born and raised in Prince George, advocating to ensure sure rural, remote and isolated areas of B.C. have access to health care is close to heart for this pharmacy student.
- 17 Sarah Kim** Since entering pharmacy school, this pharmacy student has been advocating for mental health and became instrumental in implementing multiple changes at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences.
- 19 Ben Gant Innovative Practice Award**
Cecilia Gozun This certified diabetes educator became an expert in teaching patients how to leverage technological advancements in blood sugar monitoring for the betterment of their health.
- 23 Bowl of Hygeia Award**
Joy Que She's always had a heart for community service and now works as pharmacy manager in a not-for-profit community pharmacy located in the Renfrew-Collingwood area of Vancouver.
- 26 Pharmacy Leadership Award**
Allison Nourse A born pharmacy leader, this pharmacist's responsibilities spanned the development and implementation of strategies for hundreds of pharmacies across the country.



ON THE COVER

Allison Nourse, Director, Health Systems Projects at Shoppers Drug Mart, is the recipient of the 2024 Pharmacy Leadership Award.

Thank you for attending our hybrid conference this year!

Our conference this year would not have been possible without the hundreds of in-person and virtual attendees.

We have a list of fantastic prizes that all members are eligible to enter.

Don't forget enter the prize draw by visiting bcpharmacy.ca/prizes by 11:59 p.m. on June 7, 2024.

Logging to the bcpharmacy.ca website is required.



British Columbia
Pharmacy Association

Editor in Chief Angie Gaddy
(604) 269-2863, angie.gaddy@bcpharmacy.ca

Managing Editor Michael Mui
(604) 269-2878, michael.mui@bcpharmacy.ca

Art Director Caroline Toth RGD

BCPHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Mike Huitema, president@bcpharmacy.ca

Board of Directors Colleen Hogg, Chris Chiew, Kevin Chu, Mark Dickson, Justin Dovale, Gary Go, Michelle Gray, Linda Gutenberg, Ruhani Grewal, Mark Kunzli, Kylee Power

Contact the Board of Directors board@bcpharmacy.ca

OFFICE OF THE CEO

Chief Executive Officer Geraldine Vance
(604) 269-2860, geraldine.vance@bcpharmacy.ca

Executive Assistant to the CEO and Board
Devyani Basoodetsing
(604) 269-2884, devyani.basoodetsing@bcpharmacy.ca

COMMUNICATIONS

Executive Director, Communications Angie Gaddy
(604) 269-2863, angie.gaddy@bcpharmacy.ca

Manager, Communications Michael Mui
(604) 269-2878, michael.mui@bcpharmacy.ca

Coordinator, Communications Ishika Jain
(604) 261-2092, ishika.jain@bcpharmacy.ca

PHARMACY PRACTICE SUPPORT

Executive Director, Pharmacy Practice Support & Special Projects

Bryce Wong, RPh
(604) 269-2868, bryce.wong@bcpharmacy.ca

Director, Pharmacy Practice Support Ann Johnston, RPh
(604) 269-2865, ann.johnston@bcpharmacy.ca

Coordinator, Pharmacy Practice Support Nelson Chen, RPhT
(604) 269-2880, nelson.chen@bcpharmacy.ca

Coordinator, Pharmacy Practice Support Yvonne Brown
(604) 269-2866, yvonne.brown@bcpharmacy.ca

MEMBER SERVICES

Deputy CEO and Executive Director, Member Services Vince Lee
(604) 269-2867, vince.lee@bcpharmacy.ca

Manager, Member Services Andy Shen
(604) 269-2883, andy.shen@bcpharmacy.ca

Coordinator, Member Services Linda Tinnion
(604) 269-2864, linda.tinnion@bcpharmacy.ca

Administrative Assistant Kathryn Kremastros
(604) 261-2092, kathryn.kremastros@bcpharmacy.ca

Administrative Assistant Emily Story
(604) 261-2097, emily.story@bcpharmacy.ca

CORPORATE SERVICES

Executive Director, Finance Gary Mui, CPA, CA
(604) 269-2869, gary.mui@bcpharmacy.ca

Database Administrator Ray Chow
(604) 269-2882, ray.chow@bcpharmacy.ca

The Tablet is published by the BCPhA. Views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Association. Contributed material is not guaranteed space and may be edited for brevity, clarity and content.
BCPhA Offices: #430-1200 West 73rd Avenue Vancouver, BC V6P 6G5
Telephone: (604) 261-2092 or Toll-free in BC: 1 (800) 663-2840 Fax: (604) 261-2097
Toll-free fax: 1 (877) 672-2211 E-mail: info@bcpharmacy.ca Web: bcpharmacy.ca
Publication agreement #40810576



Mike Huitema
PRESIDENT
BC PHARMACY ASSOCIATION

Congratulations!

Welcome back to our in-person awards gala, our first in five years.

This year, we have an exciting line-up of award winners who you will read about later in this special edition of *The Tablet* magazine. For those of you who are with us here at the live awards ceremony, thank you for joining us to support your colleagues. Please enjoy the series of awards videos on the screens in front of you, and give our winners a big hand of applause.

In this edition, we are featuring nine award winners, including two pharmacy students currently attending the University of B.C.'s Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Our recipients come from all walks of life. Some are just starting their pharmacy careers while others are being recognized for their decades of excellence.

This year, we have selected winners in the areas of Collaborative Care, New Practitioner, Patient Care, Mentorship, Innovation, Community Service and Leadership. We have a pharmacist who works in long-term care, one who works within a community pharmacy located inside a hospital, a pharmacist of a non-profit pharmacy, another who has focused her career on strategic planning and management; each of these pharmacists are pushing the boundaries of the profession in their own way.

Please join me in recognizing our colleagues as you read about their achievements and learn about why these people are so important to their communities and to their patients.

Selecting the awards recipients this year was tough. We received strong submissions from across B.C. and it was difficult coming down to just one person for each category of award.

It made a strong impact on me to see the clear passion that our colleagues have for this profession, their communities, their fellow health providers, and their patients. If this is a sample of who British Columbian pharmacists are, I know the public, and the future of our profession, are in good hands.

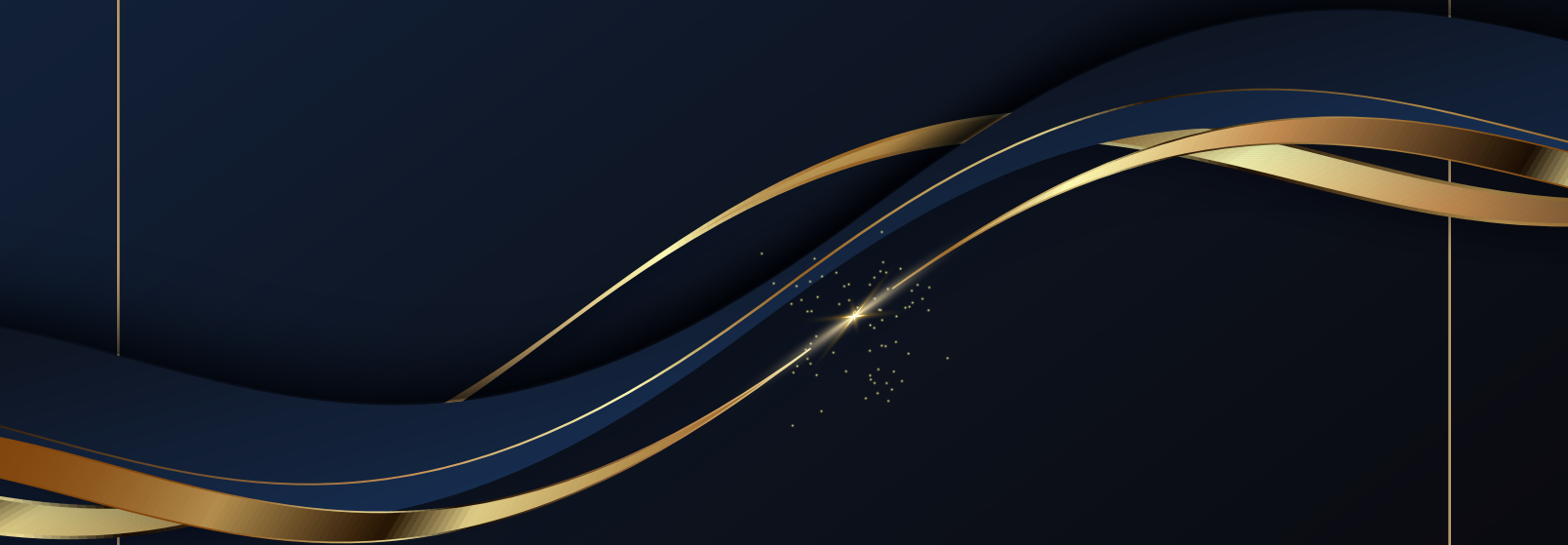
For those who were nominated, but did not receive an award, I encourage you to apply again next year. We know pharmacists in all corners of the province are demonstrating excellence in their practice every day, and we want to hear from you so we may share what you do with the rest of our colleagues.

Once again, congratulations. **T**

Honouring Pharmacy Excellence

Read about our Pharmacy Excellence Award winners in this special edition of *The Tablet* magazine. On each page, you will find a QR code that you can scan with your smartphone to see a video of the award recipient. Each year, the BC Pharmacy Association selects awards recipients among nominees in up to eight categories, in the areas of: patient care, innovation, mentorship, leadership, collaboration, new to practice, community service, and a non-pharmacist who is a friend of the profession.

For more information, please visit bcpharmacy.ca/awards.





Graeme Hill COLLABORATIVE CARE AWARD

TITLE Long-term care Pharmacist
WORKPLACE Kipp-Mallery Pharmacy
LOCATION Kamloops, B.C.

Graeme Hill, long-term care pharmacist at Kipp-Mallery Pharmacy in Kamloops, was first drawn to pharmacy because of his interest in physiology and biochemistry.

Graeme Hill was no average pharmacy student.

Six days a week, he would wake up at 4:30 a.m. and drive down to False Creek to train in competitive rowing. After two hours of hard work, he would then drive to the University of B.C. campus, where he was enrolled in the Bachelor of Science Pharmacy program.

For nearly all four years of pharmacy school, this was his schedule and routine.

Rowing offered a thrill and challenge that was similar to the difficulty of pharmacy school itself. Success was rewarding. As the son of two pharmacists, including a father who served as associate dean for external affairs at the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Hill was naturally drawn to pursue chemistry and biology in his undergraduate studies.

But because his mother worked in a hospital, and his father in universities, the 2024 Collaborative Care Award recipient didn't actually have much exposure to community pharmacy in his formative years.

Instead, it was a hospital placement opportunity in the fourth year of pharmacy school that introduced him to the interior community of Kamloops, where he's practiced since graduation.

"In school, I was really interested in the human physiology, physiology and biochemistry, and pharmacy seemed a way to apply that in a practical sense," Hill said.

"You're using medications that have effects on the body. In order to understand how they work, you need to know the physiology and the biochemistry behind that. I think it was that understanding that initially brought me into



▶ Watch Graeme's video by scanning the QR code

“

When we work together, we proactively identify solutions to problems as they come as opposed to letting the problems fester and get larger.

”

pharmacy. I enjoyed the science.”

His first position was as a staff pharmacist in a community pharmacy in Kamloops. He would stay at this location for the next decade, briefly serving as associate owner of his store, before settling into his current home, as a long-term care pharmacist at Kipp-Mallery Pharmacy in Kamloops.

“As a dispensing pharmacist, I really enjoyed working with working face to face with patients and developing those long-term relationships with these patients, some of whom were my neighbours,” he said. “But when I entered long-term care, I was finding that instead of developing relationships with patients, you end up developing relationships with the nurses and doctors in these facilities.”

Today, Hill serves more than 1,000 long-term care patients in eight communities around the Kamloops region, including Salmon Arm, Clearwater, Williams Lake and Lillooet.

A typical day involves spending two-thirds of his time inside the pharmacy, where he can often be found taking calls from fellow health providers, or receiving and entering prescriptions that are coming into the pharmacy.

The other portions of his time are dedicated to travelling to the many communities he serves, with prescription deliveries, or as part of visits to perform medication reviews for patients.

For Hill, collaboration with health-care team members means communicating and sharing information. Some of the most important skills he has learned as a collaborator is to pay attention to detail, to be willing to take suggestions from others, and to be adaptable to external best practices.

“And asking questions. It means working together to try to make things better or to find a solution to problems,” he said. “We each have our own points of view and expertise to share, and we rely on the expertise and experiences of other health professionals to get the job done.”

Collaborating matters. When health-care professionals collaborate, Hill finds that it often means better care for the patient.

“When there isn’t collaboration, issues don’t get dealt with. Problems don’t get solved. Patients who may have symptoms end up end up suffering because of it,” he said.

“When we work together, we proactively identify solutions to problems as they come as opposed to letting the problems fester and get larger.” **T**

Jas Bahniwal

NEW PRACTITIONER AWARD

TITLE Pharmacy Manager
WORKPLACE Pharmasave #1028
LOCATION Penticton, B.C.



▶ Watch Jas' video by scanning the QR code

There was never a question that Jas Bahniwal would be working in health care.

Four of his family members work in the vicinity of Penticton Regional Hospital. His mother is a care aide, his father is a licenced practical nurse, and two aunts work as housekeeper and nurse, respectively, at the hospital.

The 2024 New Practitioner Award recipient got his start in pharmacies as an assistant while completing his undergraduate degree in university. It was in part thanks to his relationship with this initial pharmacy that opened the door to his first

Jas Bahniwal, pharmacy manager at Pharmasave Penticton Regional Hospital, has been crucial to physicians in supporting urgent requests for medical assistance in dying dispenses.



opportunity after graduation.

Bahniwal, who graduated from the University of B.C.'s Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences in 2021, now works as pharmacy manager at the community pharmacy located within the Penticton Regional Hospital itself, Pharmasave #1028.

"The manager at my first pharmacy actually reached out to me. His wife was working at the hospital and she was going on maternity leave, so they recommended that I apply and I ended up getting the job," Bahniwal said.

"It's a unique situation for sure. It's just like being at home and it's a great experience to have my family there, sometimes they'll stop by during breaks, or we'll bring each other lunch."

Operating a community pharmacy inside a hospital is a somewhat unique experience, he said. Much of his regular patients are hospital staff themselves, or patients being discharged from the hospital. This means that his regular patients often know a lot more about health care than the average person in the community, and the interactions can make for some interesting conversations.

"They all have a higher baseline knowledge. The way we interact and explain things will be different. They'll have more detailed questions, they'll want to know more about the medication and the interactions," Bahniwal said.

Since taking over the pharmacy, he's built a reputation among the doctors at the hospital, particularly in the area of emergent cases of medical assistance in dying (MAID) among hospital patients. This was important for doctors at the hospital, especially during the pandemic. Some pharmacies in the area scaled back services, Bahniwal said, and the number of locations that dispensed MAID was limited.

"There were many doctors who called me and these were last-minute requests, where they told me their regular pharmacy couldn't fill their MAID request. That's how I started getting in contact with many of these prescribers," he said. "We have never refused a MAID because of time. Often the requests will come as a heads up, that they know

this patient is deteriorating and we might be scheduled for a week or two weeks from now. But then the patient really deteriorates overnight, and suddenly they need it as soon as possible."

While his pharmacy hours are only during weekdays, the emergent nature of the MAID requests means Bahniwal is occasionally called back to work on Saturdays or Sundays to accommodate the last-minute requests. It was some of these doctors who relied on Bahniwal who ended up nominating him for the 2024 Pharmacy Excellence Awards.

"I thought maybe it was the owner of the pharmacy. The physicians who nominated me are great individuals to work with. It's a huge honour. They're the ones who made me comfortable to work with their fellow physicians," he said. "They're always so thankful whenever I dispense a MAID kit to them, they'll sometimes stop by the pharmacy after hours just to thank me, just small things like that make me feel so appreciated."

When Bahniwal first accepted the position, he admitted that the chance to take over as pharmacy manager of a store immediately after graduating was a bit intimidating.

A few things reassured him. The previous pharmacist he was taking over from had also started her career as a pharmacy manager as her first posting. It was also a smaller pharmacy, where he would work as its sole pharmacist alongside an assistant, with comparatively lower work volume compared to a community pharmacy in a large city centre.

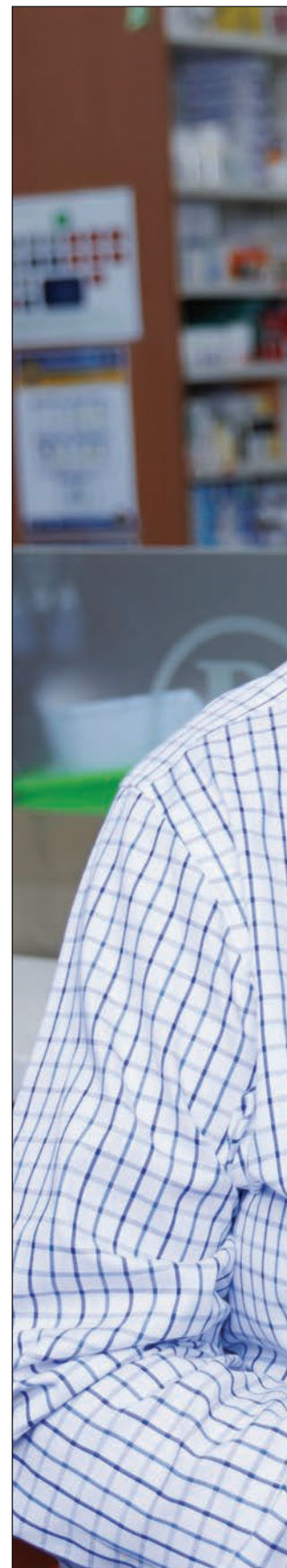
After the first three years on the job, the most rewarding thing about community pharmacy continues to be the relationships he builds with his patients and teammates in health care — it's the same feeling Bahniwal first felt when stepping into a pharmacy job as a pharmacy assistant during his university days.

"It has not changed. Now, I have a broader team of all these other health care professionals, nurses, doctors, unit clerks and others, but the rewarding feeling I have working here is still the same. I love talking to patients and I love putting a smile on their faces." ■

“

*Health care was
something that I always
had an eye on.*

”





Ron Najibnia, pharmacy operations manager at Naz Pharmacies, believes that all pharmacists should embrace clinical services that go beyond dispensing medications.

Ron (Mehran) Najibnia EXCELLENCE IN PATIENT CARE AWARD

TITLE Pharmacy Operations
Manager
WORKPLACE Naz Pharmacies
LOCATION North Vancouver, B.C.



▶ Watch Ron's video
by scanning the
QR code



Naz Pharmacies founder Nafisa Merali (centre left) and operations manager Ron Najibnia (centre right) pose for a photo with the Naz Pharmacies team.

Patients — they're at the heart of the business of pharmacy practice.

For Ron Najibnia, recipient of the 2024 Excellence in Patient Care Award, this means recognizing that the patient experience comes first. It means that pharmacists should be adaptable in understanding the needs of the individual in front of them and going beyond just dispensing to provide clinical and professional services that help improve the health of pharmacy users.

“Every night, when I go to sleep, I close my eyes and review my day, playing it back like I am at the cinema. I ask myself, how many patients did I have the pleasure to help? What services did I provide for my patients? What problems did I resolve? Doing this helps me start every new day with much more enthusiasm and with much more attention to detail,” he said.

A PharmD holder and graduate of Azad University's School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in Iran, Najibnia initially arrived in Canada in the early 2000s with the intention of furthering his education by attending school in Alberta. Before his trip to the prairie province, he stopped in British Columbia to visit his brother, who was already living here, and to meet with some of his fellow pharmacy school graduates who had earlier moved to Canada, where they started their pharmacy practice, or were getting their licence to practice.

It was this decision to visit B.C. that would change the trajectory of his career. Some of his friends were already practicing as community pharmacists, and invited him to

take a closer look at how pharmacy in Canada was different from Iran.

“I thought it was so exciting because, at that time, I felt what Canadian pharmacists were able to do for their patients was so innovative, and I believed that Canada is one of the leading countries in terms of the scope of pharmacy practice,” Najibnia said.

Instead of following his initial intention of continuing education in Alberta, he decided to become licenced to practice as a pharmacist in British Columbia first.

Since then, for the last 20 years, he has been working and leading as a community pharmacist, spending his first 10 years with Sobeys, followed by another decade at Costco. During this time, Najibnia also began to broaden his skillset by completing courses to expand his clinical knowledge and leadership skills, while taking on various teaching roles at the University of British Columbia Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

In 2024, Najibnia started his current role with Naz Pharmacies as pharmacy operations manager. Concurrently,

he is pursuing his knowledge through an MBA program in Vancouver. Today, as a leader within the profession, he sees his role as guiding new pharmacists and managers to deliver patient care with the same passion he espouses.

“These days, it's critical that pharmacists become more involved in clinical practice. Pharmacists are not just dispensers. Pharmacists are counsellors, both to the patient and to other health-care professionals. We are trustworthy sources of information,” Najibnia said. **1**

“

Pharmacists are counsellors, both to the patient and to other health-care professionals.

We are trustworthy sources of information.

”



Megan St. John
MURRAY DYKEMAN
MENTORSHIP AWARD

TITLE Assistant Pharmacy
Manager
WORKPLACE St. Anthony's Clinic
Pharmacy
LOCATION Victoria, B.C.



▶ Watch Megan's
video by scanning
the QR code

Megan St. John, assistant pharmacy manager at St. Anthony's Clinic Pharmacy, is on the fast-track to taking over the location as pharmacy manager.



“You’d make a really great pharmacist.”

It was an off-the-cuff remark from a high school teacher who was impressed by her affinity for chemistry, but for Megan St. John, it was a recommendation that would be the first cut on the trail towards a career in pharmacy.

St. John, now assistant pharmacy manager at St. Anthony’s Clinic Pharmacy in Victoria, is the recipient of the 2024 Murray Dykeman Mentorship Award. In the four years since she graduated pharmacy school, St. John has certainly made her mark as a rising star.

For one, she’s the most junior pharmacist in the 46-year history of her banner, Heart Pharmacy Group, to become pharmacy manager so soon after graduation. In her two years so far with the Heart group, she was instrumental in providing mentorship and training to four new to practice pharmacy graduates who have joined the group since summer 2023.

“I remembered being a new grad and the transition to pharmacy practice was overwhelming. I approached our HR manager and asked if we could put something together to help ease them into the company,” St. John said. “I made a slideshow for them. We introduced them to all our different stores, the resources we have within our group, and the subject matter experts within our group. We made sure they had all the tools they needed for their first day. Just making sure that they don’t get those feelings of anxiety, or feeling alone.”

“

That experience drove my desire to create spaces for people where they feel safe and supported in my own pharmacy team.

”

Having someone to help the new grads transition into practice was particularly important for the Heart group, St. John said.

Previously, the group rarely hired new graduates and preferred experienced pharmacists instead. But as the labour shortage became more prevalent, the group’s hiring practices shifted, and it took someone such as St. John to recognize that the group’s training and onboarding practices also had to adapt.

St. John recalled that, when she was a fresh graduate, she also had her own mentor who helped her become comfortable in her practice. After graduating in 2020, St. John spent her first two years working at a community pharmacy in her hometown of Prince George.

“It was my pharmacy manager at the time, and he was one of those pharmacists who just knew his clients. He was very welcoming, a great supporter during that transition for me. He also took on students and had an excited attitude towards teaching and coaching,” she said.

“That experience drove my desire to create spaces for people where they feel safe and supported in my own pharmacy team.”

For St. John, the most important qualities of mentorship are being approachable, and being someone who others are comfortable to come to for advice.

“I think, sometimes, mentorship requires a quiet confidence. Being able to be a person for somebody who they can look up to, and feel that they can be vulnerable with,” she said.

Currently, St. John is on track to become full pharmacy manager at Heart’s St. Anthony’s Clinic Pharmacy location. It’ll be a big job. Out of the Heart group’s eight pharmacies, the St. Anthony’s Clinic location is regarded as the most complex pharmacy, both operationally and clinically due to its large staff count and diverse clinical services.

“We’ve got another new graduate starting in June and we will have our first placement with the University of B.C. as a practicum site in August. It’ll be the first time I will be precepting for students. We are also growing our therapeutic recovery services and our daily dispense program,” she said. “It’s really exciting.” **■**

Ilianna Doornbos, a third-year PharmD student at the University of B.C., is a passionate advocate for rural health care.



Ilianna Doornbos

APOTEX INC. FUTURE
BRITISH COLUMBIA
PHARMACY LEADER

TITLE Third-year pharmacy student

WORKPLACE University of British Columbia

LOCATION Vancouver, B.C.



▶ Watch Ilianna's video by scanning the QR code

Enabling opportunities to be in a career that offers work-life balance is important for third-year PharmD student Ilianna Doornbos.

Growing up in a family of six, Doornbos was raised by her mother, a licenced practical nurse who was the sole provider for her family. This meant that her mom often had to work long hours, and Doornbos and her five siblings learned to be independent from a young age.

This experience had an impact on Doornbos, one of the recipients of the 2024 Apotex Inc. Future British Columbia Pharmacy Leader Award. It made her realize that a career not only needs to provide financially for her family, it also needs to provide a balance between the home and professional lives so that, if she chooses to raise a family, she would have the opportunity to spend time at home without worry.

Pharmacy seemed to be that opportunity.

“Nursing was not for me. I also didn’t know too many doctors growing up, and it seemed like the amount of stress involved in pursuing medical school wasn’t the type of work-life balance I was seeking,” Doornbos said.

“I liked the idea of patient care, though, of building relationships within communities and making a difference in people. I saw pharmacy as a profession that’s growing and isn’t slowing down. We’ve seen it already with the recent expansion of scope.”

For Doornbos, patient care means making a difference, and helping deliver accessible patient care could mean — in the most extreme cases — the difference between life and death for someone in the community.

“It feels good when you can help them, and helping someone as a pharmacist can be impactful and even life-changing for a patient,” she said.

“As health care workers, whether you’re a pharmacist or a doctor or a nurse, we’re all experts in our own fields. Health care is collaborative, we can learn from each other and when we deliver health care together, we are more than the sum of our parts.”

Upon selecting pharmacy, Doornbos realized the significant costs for tuition may be prohibitive for prospective students. Initially, she had intended to apply for a student loan forgiveness program to help offset some

costs, but discovered that pharmacists were not eligible for any such government programs in Canada. With some help from her family, she was able to enroll.

But the idea that some other students might not be so fortunate never left her.

“In January this year, I had the opportunity to go to professional development week in Toronto with the Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns (CAPSI). At the trade show the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) had a booth, and they were advocating to include pharmacy students into the federal loan forgiveness program,” Doornbos said. “They had a letter template set up, so I filled in my information to send letters to my Members of Parliament. A month later, I got an email from the CPhA and CAPSI, asking if I would get involved in this advocacy effort.”

A couple of discussions later, and Doornbos decided that she would make sure organizations in B.C. also got involved in advocating for pharmacists to be included in student loan forgiveness programs. She reached out to contacts in both the University of B.C. and the BC Pharmacy Association to help spread the news.

In April, the federal government announced in its 2024 budget that pharmacy students would be included for eligibility in the Canada student loan forgiveness program.

“It was kind of one of those screaming, crying, throwing up moments of excitement. I’m

still bubbling about it. This is definitely evidence of what can happen when we all work together to advocate for the betterment of the profession,” Doornbos said.

Making sure rural, remote and isolated areas of B.C. have access to health care is close to heart for her. Born and raised in Prince George, Doornbos never had any question she would return to rural B.C. to practice pharmacy upon graduation. Those were the communities she focused on for her practicums, and she’s already worked in pharmacies in Vanderhoof and Prince George. Later this year, she’ll be working at a pharmacy in Vernon.

“I went into pharmacy to help people,” she said. “Once I graduate, I hope to do a residency, and do a few years of service back at my community hospital, and then once I gain experience to move into primary care. I’m pretty open to what the future looks like.” **T**

“
I liked the idea of patient care, though, of building relationships within communities and making a difference in people. I saw pharmacy as a profession that’s growing and isn’t slowing down.”

”

Sarah Kim, a third-year PharmD student at the University of B.C., made substantial changes to the types of mental health supports available for pharmacy students.

Sarah (Nakyung) Kim

APOTEX INC. FUTURE
BRITISH COLUMBIA
PHARMACY LEADER

TITLE Third-year pharmacy student
WORKPLACE University of British Columbia
LOCATION Vancouver, B.C.



▶ Watch Sarah's video by scanning the QR code

There's health care, and then there's patient-centred health care.

Third-year PharmD student Sarah Kim saw the differences firsthand when her grandfather battled with cancer in 2022. He was confused and frustrated throughout his chemotherapy as he didn't know it would take a such big toll in his life. While there was no question he was in good hands, the worsening side effects created hesitation in continuing his chemotherapy. He needed empathy, especially after his wife's passing.

"I remember sitting outside the doctor's office with my grandpa, holding his hand tightly. He was scared seeing his hair and nails fall off, and his feet swelling up so much that there were no shoes that fit him anymore. He was afraid. Seeing someone I admired become vulnerable and frail deeply touched me. To help comfort him, I clarified that while chemotherapy targets both 'bad' and 'good' cells, there are medications available to alleviate some of the associated side effects," Kim said.

"While it's true that we may not have the luxury of extensive time with each patient, it's crucial that we engage fully during our interactions. By truly listening and empathizing, we can help our patients feel more at ease and understood."

Kim's guidance not only eased her grandfather's fears and corrected misconceptions about his treatment, but also solidified her belief in the vital role of pharmacists as readily accessible health care providers. This realization, coupled with understanding of the significance of having a trusted health care provider, confirmed her decision to become a pharmacist.

Growing up, Kim never thought she would enter pharmacy school. Her heart longed for the fine arts. Not to mention, she personally wasn't familiar with what a pharmacist actually did behind the counter. That all changed one day, when she needed urgent medical advice for a condition affecting her eye. It was during the start of the COVID pandemic. Doctors offices were closed and her options to seek advice were limited, so she went to a pharmacy.

That's when she realized how accessible and knowledgeable pharmacists are. At the time, she was attending the University of Toronto, specializing in pharmacology and toxicology. In her final year, she decided to apply to pharmacy school and was accepted into the University of B.C.'s Entry-to-Practice PharmD program.

Since entering pharmacy school, one of her focuses has been advocating for mental health. Kim recalled that during her undergraduate years, while studying in Toronto far away from her family and friends in B.C., her own mental health deteriorated.

"At the time I was trying to see a counsellor, but there was this huge waitlist and counselling sessions were very expensive," she said.

"When I started my first year of pharmacy school, I saw a posting about a Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) in the faculty. That reminded me of my own experience and I decided to join."

The taskforce is a collaboration between students and faculty members with the aim of improving students' mental health. Additionally, she was invited to join the Student Wellbeing Working Group (SWWG), which had similar goal as the MHTF but with its impact at program level.

Through her involvement in MHTF and SWWG, she was instrumental in implementing several changes: increasing the number of hours students can access the faculty counsellor, re-

moving grade distribution scores that identify what "quartile" of performance a student is in compared to their peers, setting up a pet therapy event for students to hang out with rabbits, reviving a wellness wall with positive messages in the student lounge, and the launch of a mental health resource booth that students can access during a mental health day called Rx for Mind and Body.

"I really felt that having a two-way conversation between the students and the faculty can be a key to fostering a positive learning environment and upgrading our program to the next level," Kim said. "In receiving this award, I just want to say I'm very grateful to my family, my friends, my mentors, my professors, and everyone I have met throughout my academic journey. Without them, I would not be where I am." **T**

“

While it's true that we may not have the luxury of extensive time with each patient, it's crucial that we engage fully during our interactions. By truly listening and empathizing, we can help our patients feel more at ease and understood.

”

Cecilia Gozun, pharmacy manager at Save-on-Foods Pharmacy #2267, is regarded as a technology guru among her peers in the use of continuous glucose monitoring devices.



Cecilia Gozun
**BEN GANT INNOVATIVE
PRACTICE AWARD**

TITLE Pharmacy Manager
WORKPLACE Save-on-Foods
Pharmacy #2267
LOCATION Surrey, B.C.



▶ Watch Cecilia's
video by scanning
the QR code

Over the course of a career, a pharmacist working in British Columbia will likely witness many changes to the profession.

After graduating from pharmacy school in the Philippines, Cecilia Gozun arrived in Canada, starting as a relief pharmacist in 2006. Since then, she has seen the profession in B.C. become enabled to administer vaccines by injection, prescribe for minor ailments, and with advancements in medical device technology, become experts in teaching patients to leverage technological advancements for the betterment of their health.

These days, Gozun — the 2024 recipient of the Ben Gant Innovative Practice Award — serves as the pharmacy manager at Save-on-Foods Pharmacy #2267, a relatively new location in Surrey. Here, she is relied on as a technology guru when it comes to training fellow pharmacists and patients on continuous glucose sensors (CGM).

“We have been doing regular CGM trainings weekly for approximately two years now and are dispensing around 30 to 60 CGMs from our pharmacy on a monthly basis,” she said.

“I wanted to introduce CGM to our patients because I know they will benefit a lot from using this technology. It will help them have more control on their sugar readings, which in turn helps them manage their diabetes properly. CGM provides my patients with 24-hour monitoring of glucose information, without requiring multiple fingertips poking, which patients get tired of doing.

“CGM can also be connected to doctors’ offices, which helps them decide the right care plan. They can also be connected to a family member or caregiver, giving both parties the peace of mind to be able to see what the patient’s blood sugar is at any particular moment.”

This affinity for understanding technology has resulted in relationships with other health

care providers who work in the field of diabetes management.

“We were given a very good opportunity to work closely with Dr. Akshay Jain, MD, who operates an endocrinology clinic next door. He wanted to work with a diabetes educator and came up to our counter here, looking for someone that would be able to work with his patients. That was the start of our collaboration,” Gozun said.

“He wanted me to help the patients learn how to put on and use their sensors before they went to his clinic. We also do A1C and lipid panel testing for those who haven’t had their labs done in the last three months, which serves as a valuable decision-making tool for them.”

Throughout her career, Gozun estimates that she has worked at more than 50 locations within the Save-on-Foods chain. She’s seen and done it all, spending the first five years with the company travelling as a relief pharmacist to numerous stores throughout British Columbia and Alberta. Her desire, however, was always to work at a permanent location in the Lower Mainland.

She soon got her wish. After spending a year as a staff pharmacist in 100 Mile House, she was dispatched first to the Newton neighbourhood

in Surrey, then to Cloverdale, plus a brief period as an assistant manager in White Rock, before being offered a pharmacy manager posting in Pitt Meadows.

“It was a new store in Pitt Meadows and I wanted to introduce our pharmacy to the community. The doctors didn’t know us yet. There weren’t a lot of pharmacies in Pitt Meadows at the time. I decided to introduce myself to all the pharmacies and all the medical clinics, and I think it worked,” Gozun said.

Around 2018, Gozun went to obtain her diabetes educator certification. In part, it was because patients would often arrive at the

“

For them, having this new device can be quite life-changing, plus the device can be connected to their caregivers, or to the doctor’s office, and it just offers a much more patient-centered experience.

”

We're Hiring

Join our **saveonfoods** Pharmacy Team



- As a valued member of an innovative Western Canadian company, our pharmacy teams are passionate about helping our customers and communities embrace healthier lifestyles by delivering quality, patient-centred care.
- Our Clinical Pharmacists play a crucial role in developing and executing clinical programs for the organization, catering to clinical needs in specific communities across BC.
- We are currently seeking Clinical Pharmacists to join our pharmacy teams located in the Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Okanagan and Vancouver Island.
- If you are interested in learning more or growing your career with our Pharmacy team, apply today or contact Recruitment@SaveOnFoods.com.

Scan the QR code to learn more:
Save-On-Foods (myworkdayjobs.com)





Above: (Left to right) Taylor Quon, Gary Jung, Cecilia Gozun, Chi Quon and Livia Chan of the Save-on-Foods Pharmacy team, along with Dr. Akshay Jain, MD.

pharmacy with questions about diabetes management, and she wanted to be better equipped to help these patients.

It was around the same time that she was moved from her Pitt Meadows store to manage a pharmacy in Surrey, at a location that was much busier. This store eventually moved to her current location, at King George Junction, where she continued its management.

“My concept of pharmacy innovation entails ensuring accessible health care by elevating the roles of pharmacy staff to provide uninterrupted, patient-centered

services,” she said.

“This includes expanding the responsibilities of assistants beyond pill counting, while empowering pharmacists to offer education, prescribing and immunizations.”

It’s about pushing the boundaries. If she could give former self advice with the knowledge she has now, it would be to challenge herself.

“Continue to challenge yourself to be the best while embracing all the priceless lessons from your mentors along the way. Always be grateful and stay grounded.” **T**

Joy Que, pharmacy manager at Rise CHC Pharmacy, has focused her career on helping those who are marginalized.



Joy (Lunia) Que
BOWL OF HYGEIA AWARD

TITLE Pharmacy Manager
WORKPLACE Rise CHC Pharmacy
LOCATION Vancouver, B.C.



▶ Watch Joy's video
by scanning the
QR code

What's a pharmacy without profit?

For 2019 UBC pharmacy graduate Joy Que, that would be her workplace, Rise CHC Pharmacy, located just steps away from the Joyce-Collingwood SkyTrain station in Vancouver.

Que has always had a heart for community service. Growing up, she volunteered in the Downtown Eastside through her church group, and later, that passion for helping those less fortunate extended to volunteering with the Vancouver Coastal Health at a needle exchange. She also spent time volunteering on a First Nations reserve, which inspired her to enroll in an Indigenous studies course in post-secondary.

“Mental health and addictions have always been important topics for me. People who suffer from mental health and substance use disorders are often marginalized, and in my family, because of our Asian culture and background, those are topics that aren't really talked about in the open,” said Que, the recipient of the 2024 Bowl of Hygeia Award for community service.

Upon becoming a pharmacist, her first place of employment was at a pharmacy in the Downtown Eastside that specialized in opioid agonist treatment, along with working closely with detox and transitional housing facilities.

About two years later, an opportunity came up at Rise for a pharmacist working in a multidisciplinary community setting.

RISE Community Health Centre opened in 2020, created as a response to the lower number of family doctors in the neighbourhood. The health centre itself is a part of Collingwood Neighbourhood House, a non-profit society that provides services and community development initiatives for residents in the Renfrew-Collingwood area in east Vancouver. RISE Community Health Centre includes a primary care clinic, a pharmacy, and employs staff ranging from nurses, dietitians, physiotherapists, counsellors to occupational

therapists. The name of the centre is actually an acronym, to mean: Resilient, Integrative, Socially Just and Equitable.

“I was drawn by the multidisciplinary setting. I find that when you have a patient who regularly works with multiple health professionals, this improves patient outcomes. Everyone in the health-care team knows what the patient's goals are and together, we can prioritize their needs,” Que said.

Many of the clinic's clients are new immigrants to the area. Often, Que said, this means that patients are in the process of getting paperwork sorted, such as registering with Fair PharmaCare.

“One of the biggest things you see, in terms of problems that patients are facing, is coverage for medications,” she said. “These are newcomers and often they can't afford their medications without coverage, so if there's no coverage, they likely won't be taking their medications at all.”

The clinic itself only opened in 2020, with Que as its first pharmacist. Since then the pharmacy's prescription count has been growing, though not quite at the point where revenues have broken even with expenses. For Que, it's reassuring that the main motivation for the pharmacy isn't revenue itself, but patient care.

Once the pharmacy does generate a profit, the additional revenues will be put back into patient programs, she said.

“In school, you hear about some of the corporate pharmacies and the pressures that owners or managers will put in place to drive up business. That's not something that appeals to me,” Que said.

Each day at RISE Community Health Centre starts with a 30-minute “morning huddle” with clinic staff, a sort of check in to review the past day and any emerging issues — whether professional or personal — that might have arisen. This helps build camaraderie and allows staff to split the work during busy days. Immunizations, for example, might be shared between the nurses and the pharmacy, depending on the day's schedule. This time in the morning also encourages collaborative

“

I was drawn by the multidisciplinary setting. I find that when you have a patient who regularly works with multiple health professionals, this improves patient outcomes.

”



Above: Meet the staff members who work at RISE Community Health Centre.

discussion on patient care.

For Que, her priority is to help patients become more independent in their own care. This could mean taking the time to make sure a patient understands how to properly use a medical device by having the patient come in during a less busy time, or helping a patient understand what an immunization record is and why it's important to keep up with vaccinations.

“The biggest one is often continuous glucose monitoring. I would take the time to help the patient learn how to apply those sensors on their own and to set it up so they can receive the information from the sensors on their phone,” she said. “If you try to do that when it's busy, or when they come to pick up a prescription, they're so bombarded with information that they're not going to remember anything you say.”

This type of education is especially important for patients who live alone, Que said, such as seniors who are living alone or new immigrants, who may

have the additional challenge of language issues.

Other times, for those patients who do have family members who can help, it can mean bringing in the patient's family and demonstrating the steps to the family member, so they can help the patient at home.

Looking ahead, Que is looking forward to the day the pharmacy breaks even. Once the pharmacy is profitable, she would like to create a program where the extra money is reinvested into medications for patients without coverage, and who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford the costs.

“Many patients who were previously on work or study permits have their coverage lapse when they apply for permanent residency, because they didn't know they had to extend their previous visas to maintain coverage,” Que said.

“So, we would have some sort of fund, with criteria and ways to determine if someone meets the need, and they won't have to go without their medications.” **I**

“

I believe we have to give back to the profession if it is to keep pace with the evolving needs of society and to continue being a desirable and rewarding place to work.

”

Allison Nourse
PHARMACY LEADERSHIP
AWARD

TITLE Director, Health
Systems Projects

WORKPLACE Shoppers Drug Mart

LOCATION Vancouver, B.C.



▶ Watch Allison's
video by scanning
the QR code



Allison Nourse, Director, Health Systems Projects at Shoppers Drug Mart, has had a career that focused on pharmacy leadership roles.

Making change happen.

For pharmacist Allison Nourse, driving change for better health care is the key behind her concept of leadership in pharmacy. It's a notion that has helped define her career. Nourse has demonstrated a unique trajectory in her career, exhibiting her commitment to leadership and innovation in the pharmacy sector.

She has tackled numerous unconventional pharmacist roles during her career. Roles where strategy, change management, and working to advance the profession have always been her focus. Nourse currently serves as Director, Health Systems Projects at Shoppers Drug Mart. In this role, she collaborates with universities, provincial health systems and foundations across Canada, advancing research and models of care that drive changes to both the health system and pharmacy practice. The goal — delivering more collaborative and accessible care to Canadians.

After graduating in 2003, as many of her colleagues found positions in hospital or community pharmacy, Nourse embarked on a different path as a practice consultant. While working directly with clients, her role also involved dividing her time among eight community pharmacies in B.C.'s Interior. It was a mix of providing direct client care for chronic disease prevention and management, plus creating and delivering community health seminars. She also collaborated with other health care providers and trained and supported other pharmacists to provide the services. Understanding the unmet needs of the community and the clients served were key aspects of the role.

"I worked with each of the owners to determine what their community needed and what services their pharmacy could offer," Nourse said.

Services ranged from bone density scanning and cholesterol testing to asthma, diabetes, sleep, pain, weight management, menopause, smoking cessation, and overall wellness. She also planned how best to create awareness, from newspaper articles to letters to physicians and other health care professionals in the area.

In 2005, Nourse returned to school and completed an Industrial Residency at the University of Toronto. Here, she experienced several different avenues of the pharmacy

industry, including new product development, health economics, market access and marketing.

With each new position that followed, Nourse's approach was solving the challenge presented by her employer. In one position, she led a team of software developers to enhance functionality for the in-house pharmacy dispensary software, and create plans for integrating electronic health records. In another position, she managed the training, quality assurance and interprofessional collaboration of more than 70 pharmacists who provided overnight virtual medication information services across B.C. and Alberta in collaboration with the Nurse Line, now known as 8-1-1. Another role led her into warehouse logistics and supply chain management, operations, and supporting new pharmacy openings.

As the scale of Nourse's work grew, her responsibilities eventually spanned the development and implementation of strategies for hundreds of pharmacies across the country. During this time, she also served in positions on approximately a dozen committees and boards of directors, including six years as a board member of the B.C. Pharmacy Association, serving as President of the board from 2015 to 2016.

"I believe we have to give back to the profession if it is to keep pace with the evolving needs of society and to continue being a desirable and rewarding place to work," she said.

"As a leader, I know that the choices I make will affect thousands

of pharmacists, their teams, their clients, and the system as a whole," Nourse said. "When you make a change there is always a ripple effect. You have to understand the pros and cons and determine if the benefits of the change outweigh the risks. Why are we doing this and what is the outcome we are looking for? When I design and roll out a new service, I always have the end users in mind."

In recent years, Nourse returned to her alma mater as Assistant Director of the Pharmacists Clinic at the University of B.C. where she was responsible for the operations of the clinic, collaboration with external partners and mentoring several students. When the opportunity arose to collaborate with universities and health systems across Canada, Nourse decided to make the move to Shoppers Drug Mart.

"My new role enables me to bring together my experiences and knowledge in a magnitude of ways," said Nourse.

“

The impact that my work has on people and the health care systems has always been important to me, particularly for the clients we serve, by making sure that we're doing what is right for them.

”

**SHOPPERS
DRUG MART**



For over 60 years, Canadians have entrusted Shoppers Drug Mart with their health and wellness needs.

Why Shoppers Drug Mart?

- Competitive compensation & benefits
- Student scholarship program
- Career advancement opportunities
- Signing bonuses
- Employee discount
- Opportunity to become an Associate Owner of a store



**APPLY
NOW**

**Explore career opportunities at
[www.corporate.shoppersdrugmart.ca
/en/careers/life-at-shoppers](http://www.corporate.shoppersdrugmart.ca/en/careers/life-at-shoppers)**



Above: (Left to right)
Pindy Janda, general
manager at uniPHARM
Wholesale Drugs Ltd.,
Allison Nourse and
Mona Kwong, pharmacy
advisor and director
of the B.C. Centre on
Substance Use Clinical
Addiction Pharmacy
Fellowship.

“The impact that my work has on people and the health care systems has always been important to me, particularly for the clients we serve, by making sure that we’re doing what is right for them.”

One of Nourse’s current projects includes supporting the profession to incorporate cultural safety and humility into community pharmacy. She describes her leadership approach as one of compassion and care, being open and adaptable, and encouraging others to approach her and to share their thoughts.

“I have seen different styles of leadership in my career,” she said. “I try to apply the leadership style that supported me the most in my career growth while acknowledging that everyone has a different learning style and method of communication.”

Nourse is also a firm believer in mentorship and supporting the growth of future leaders.

“You can’t have good leaders unless you help support others in the profession and provide opportunities for growth and development,” she said.

Overall, Nourse’s progressive mindset and her career path reflect her dedication to leadership, innovation, and excellence in pharmacy practice. Her multifaceted experiences across different sectors of the industry have equipped her with a unique skill set and perspective, positioning her as a trailblazer in the field.

“It was a big choice to move into a corporate setting, but I know the programs and resources I create directly affect client care through supporting and enabling other pharmacists,” she said.

And, for up-and-coming leaders, she has this to say:

“What can students do if they want a career path like this? Don’t be afraid to try something new and venture out of the city. Some of my best experiences were working in small towns. Get involved in the profession, volunteer at events and take any chance you can get to practice the new skills you learn. Don’t accept the status quo, find places to work where managers embrace practice change and collaboration.” **T**

Congratulations!

Thank you, once again, to each of our Pharmacy Excellence Award winners for showcasing the best of our profession. Each of you are shining examples of what it means to be a community pharmacist.

Our members are present throughout the province in virtually every community. For our patients and our fellow health providers, you are the difference that keeps health care accessible to everyone.





Naz's Pharmacy welcomes pharmacists to join our fast-paced, community pharmacy group in the Lower Mainland.

We are focused on patient care and dispensing a healthy lifestyle by working closely with physicians and healthcare providers. As a member of our team, you will be engaged in clinical advising, minor ailment prescribing, specialized compounding, and dispensing medications.

We encourage all prospective pharmacists to apply.

We want dedicated and motivated pharmacists who are willing to learn and proactively solve the healthcare needs of patients.

Please send your resume to admin@nazpharmacies.com or visit our website at www.nazpharmacies.com.

Successful candidates will be contacted.

