



# University Point of Contact Newsletter

An informational and informal publication of the USPHS Pharmacist Professional  
Advisory Committee

[WWW.PHSPHARMACIST.ORG](http://WWW.PHSPHARMACIST.ORG)

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## TIPS FROM OFFICERS:

- Dress in layers if possible. You never know if the room will be cold or hot!
- Review terms of IHS Loan Repayment Program before you speak to students.
- Obtain the latest list of vacancies before you go.
- Familiarize yourself with the names of officer contacts with the various agencies.

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## Acquiring recruitment Materials for Events— Plan Ahead

Have you seen a career fair coming up in a few months on your school's website? Want to participate? Here's what you need to do: First, check with the other UPOCs for the school to see if they have already made plans to participate. Next, prepare to have recruitment materials sent to you. (use the links in the box to the right) You can use the Associate Recruiter form to have pamphlets, pens, and a stand-up display sent to you. Be sure to allow 30 days for the Di-

vision of Commissioned Corps Recruitment (DCCR) to send you the materials. Look at the recruitment checklist (see link below) to jog your memory on other items to bring with you. Lastly, if you bring documents such as the Pharmacy's Best Kept Secret, be sure you have the most up-to-date release since it has

been recently updated.

If you have questions, LT Felicia Watts is the officer to reach.



### Important Links:

- [www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/pharmacy/recruit.html](http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/pharmacy/recruit.html)
- [www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/pharmacy/pdf/recruitcklst.pdf](http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/pharmacy/pdf/recruitcklst.pdf)
- [www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/pharmacy/pdf/SupplyRequestFormv3.pdf](http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/pharmacy/pdf/SupplyRequestFormv3.pdf)

## CDR Cassandra White Sends Students Behind Bars

For the past two years, USP Hazelton has offered an institution tour / PHS presentation to P3 students from the West Virginia University School of Pharmacy who are interested in completing an Advanced Practice rotation with the BOP or PHS during their P4 year. Myself and the Health Services Administrator (a PHS nurse) provide a tour of the facility, focusing on the Health Services department and the Pharmacy.

We also present the PHS recruitment slide show, our personal PHS bios, and host a Q&A about BOP/PHS. The "Best Kept Secret" pamphlet is provided to all attendees. These tours take 2 ½ to 3 hours.

Since USP Hazelton is a high security facility with maximum custody inmates

many questions regarding safety are asked. I always talk about the various layers of safety in a correctional environment; physical barriers, communication skills, consequences, and staff response. Then I tell them I feel safer in a prison pharmacy than in a community pharmacy. Students are also surprised to see that an institution is like a mini-city; complete with a school system, places of worship, a barber, a medical clinic, a jail, a store, etc... There are always a few questions about benefits, starting salaries, and loan repayment.

The question that always comes up about PHS is 'where is the fine print?' or 'what is the catch?' I tell them I haven't found it yet.

*CDR White is stationed at USP Hazelton at Bruceton Mills, WV.*

## Officers in the Pharmacy Schools...

### LT Chinyelum Umejei Visits Alma Mater

On October 22, 2009, I went to my alma-mater Hampton University School of Pharmacy in Hampton, VA as the PharmPAC University Point of Contact to give a presentation about the opportunities available within the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). The turnout was excellent since it was a mandatory event. The students seemed excited and grateful about my presentation. Prior to my presentation, most of them had never heard of USPHS. As I stood there presenting, I saw how attentive they were especially when I got to the benefits and perks portion of the presentation. Most of the students there were interested in the Jr. COSTEP and Sr. COSTEP Program. They especially loved the flexibility and the various agencies that the Corps had to offer. Some of the fourth year students were interested in the Indian Health Service and the Residency Programs.

At the end of the presentation, there were various questions that I was asked like what do I dislike about the Corp? My response was "the paperwork is lengthy but in the end, it's worth it." I handed out my business cards to those who were interested and offered to try my best to answer their questions in the future as they go through the application process.

The dean and faculty members were appreciative that I came and invited me to come back for the annual Awards Banquet: Rite of Passage Ceremony in April. Overall, this was a great experience for me and I look forward to it again.



*LT Umejei is a Staff Pharmacist at the Winslow Indian Health Care Center in Winslow, AZ.*

### LCDR Mark Sellers Meets with Students at St. Louis College of Pharmacy



The St. Louis College of Pharmacy (StLCoP) was founded on November 11th, 1864 by a group of prominent St. Louis leaders making it the eighth formal program in the nation. Currently, it has grown into one of the largest colleges of pharmacy in America with an enrollment of just over 1200 students from 25 states. I am currently the primary University Point of Contact for StLCoP. I am not an alumnus, but have indirect connections to the college due to proximity of my current duty station, growing up in the St. Louis area, and having a wife who is an alumnus.

I have also become a preceptor with StLCoP in order to provide students another avenue for experiencing Public Health Service (PHS) pharmacy practice.

## LCDR Mark Sellers visits St. Louis College of Pharmacy (continued)

Each fall in October, St. Louis College of Pharmacy hosts a number of events around their alumni weekend, such as educational symposium for preceptors covering a wide variety of topics to enhance student rotations, pharmacy practice resident continuing education programming, career fair for students, and company interviews for 6th year students. Many businesses and uniformed services attend the career fair in order to meet with a large concentration of students. StLCoP does a great job coordinating this event and allows the PHS a table. Barb Gist, the coordinator, also ensures recruiters have refreshments and don't go hungry.

Programs like this allow officers the opportunity to meet with students on a personal level. In addition, providing recruitment materials (e.g. first aid kits, info sheets/folders, copies of Pharmacy's Best Kept Secret), answering questions, and gathering student contact information for future follow-up are all benefits to participation in the career fair. Another benefit of venues such as this is the ability to meet with potential students seeking an experiential rotation with the PHS. For example, I met the students I am precepting for the 2009-2010 academic year at last year's career fair.

After leaving the career fair, I send out an informational email to all those that signed up. In this email, the information is broken down by where they are in their academic

career with links to pertinent topics (i.e., JRCOSTEP for earlier years, SRCOSTEP/rotations/benefits for later years). Application deadlines for JR/SRCOSTEPs are emphasized and my contact information is provided should they have any additional questions. Students have contacted me for more information on a range of topics such as medically disqualifying conditions, rotation sites in specific areas, contact information for officers in a variety of agencies, and so forth. I then do my best to put them in touch with the person that would be better able to answer some of their questions.

Campus visits and direct interaction are still our best tool in reaching students about the PHS. I highly recommend getting involved with one or more colleges of pharmacy to develop relationships with students, faculty, administration, and alumni. The personal and professional rewards and Corps development potential are truly worth the effort. *LCDR Mark Sellers currently serves with the Bureau of Prisons in Springfield, MO and can be reached at [BOP12801@bop.gov](mailto:BOP12801@bop.gov).*



Email UPOC school reports & photos to CDR Peter Vermilyea at [peter.vermilyea@wihcc.org](mailto:peter.vermilyea@wihcc.org)

## USPHS Pharmacists Host National Career Development Month at Area Community College

By LCDR Sandeep Saini and CDR William Bender

During National Career Development Month, six United States Public Health Service (USPHS) pharmacists from the Washington D.C. area volunteered their time to students at Montgomery College in Takoma Park, MD regarding career opportunities within the USPHS. This was the third year that the USPHS attended this event, and the officers were very pleased with the increased knowledge the students displayed regarding the USPHS and public health issues such as smoking cessation, alcoholism, obesity, and immunizations.

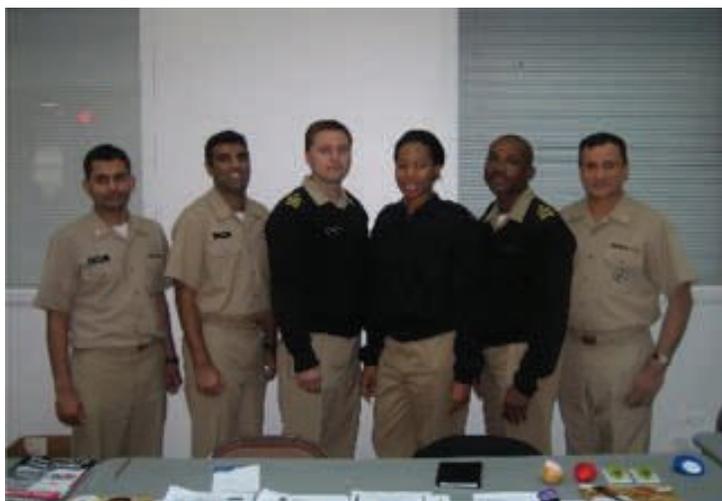
During our previous trips to Montgomery College in 2006 and 2007 it was unusual to find a student that had heard of the USPHS. However, this year there were many students acquainted with the USPHS, and they

came armed with plenty of questions. The genuine interest in the USPHS was much appreciated as students are becoming more aware of the USPHS and all that it has to offer. Many of the students inquired about internship opportunities, and we encouraged them to apply for the COSTEP and Residency programs.

The USPHS pharmacists that attended this event also counseled students regarding important public health issues such as obesity, immunizations, depression, and suicide prevention. The officers came ready with many materials obtained free of charge from government resources. Pharmacists obtained this high-quality public health information from government agencies such as the CDC, NIH, SAMHSA, and FDA. Since Montgomery College - Takoma Park is a diverse campus with students from around the world, it was helpful

that these materials were available in different languages so that the students could share this important information with their family members.

All of the USPHS officers that volunteered for this event wore their uniforms with pride and distinction. As the Career/Transfer Center Coordinator, Ms. Roberta Buckberg, stated in an appreciation letter that she sent to each officer, *"Many of our students want public service careers and many more in the health field - the Public Health Service is a perfect marriage of the two and your visits provide some talented students who face financial challenges with a path to continue toward their dreams. You gave them valuable information and insights that will impact not only their professional goals, but their personal lives and health as well."* Statements such as these make us proud to be part of the Commissioned Corps.



Pictured from left to right are Commissioned Corps Public Health Service pharmacists CDR Devvrat Patel, LCDR Sandeep Saini, CDR William Bender, CDR Nina Nwaba, LCDR Kofi Ansah, and CDR Nitin Patel, participating at the National Career Development Month event at Montgomery College in Takoma Park, Maryland.



Email UPOC school reports & photos to CDR Peter Vermilyea at [peter.vermilyea@wihcc.org](mailto:peter.vermilyea@wihcc.org)