

November 2017

Volume VIII, Issue X

Madeline Ciccone, Editor

Vermont Pharmacy News

Student Chapter Gets Involved

Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences held it's first VPA meeting of the academic year, and did an excellent job welcoming the new student pharmacists into the chapter. President Kimberly Colgan has rolled out a few brand new events for the student chapter this year, including a **Bottle Drive fundraiser** and a **Halloween Candy fundraiser** to raise money for the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf. In addition, the student chapter will be present for the **Burlington Health Fair** on November 8th, located at the Burlington Airport, to do blood glucose screenings for staff and travelers. Students are also invited to the **VPA Fall Social** on November 2nd at On Tap in Essex to meet with the other members of the Vermont Pharmacist Association.

Carrie Phillips Welcomed As Officer On the Vermont Board of Pharmacy

This past August, Dr. Carrie Phillips was appointed as the Executive Officer on the Vermont Board of Pharmacy. Dr. Phillips also serves as the Director of Pharmacy at Copley Hospital in Morrisville, VT. Previously, Dr. Phillips served as an inpatient pharmacist at St. Peter's Health Care in Albany, NY. She is a graduate from Nazareth College (Rochester, NY) and Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

Montpelier Pharmacy Sold To Kinney Drugs

Independent pharmacy owners, Rich Harvie and Jocelyn DePaolis, are selling their pharmacies in Montpelier and Waterbury to Kinney Drugs, a New York-based regional chain.

According to co-owner

Harvie, Montpelier Pharmacy will be “rebranded,” while Waterbury Pharmacy will merge into an existing Kinney Drugs located down the street. Kinney Drugs will be offering positions to all of the current employees stationed within the companies. “That was a big concern of mine,” he added. “A lot of these people have been with me for 30 years, so, you know – they’re friends.” Montpelier Pharmacy was formed with DePaolis in 2007 after their previous pharmacy, Brooks Pharmacy, was reportedly being sold to Rite-Aid. The two partners founded Waterbury Pharmacy in 2010, and worked with a third partner, Andy Miller, to open a store in Brattleboro, VT. Harvie said the store in Brattleboro would continue to be independently owned and operated by Miller. Harvie states his experience as an independent pharmacy owner was “terrific,” but he’s ready to relax and retire. His decision to sell to Kinney Drugs was due in part to the fact Kinney is employee-owned, but also that he “didn’t want the company to go to one of the really big chains.” While Kinney drugs does rake in business from it’s stores across New York and Vermont, it doesn’t compare to the nation-wide domination from bigger, more corporate chains. Harvie said Kinney Drugs reminds him of his former employer, Brooks Pharmacy, back when it was “a small New England company” that takes good care of its employees, which may be reflected in the agreement to hire the Montpelier and Waterbury pharmacies’ current staff. The sale is expected to happen this October.

[Read more](#)



Photo by Cyrus Ready-Campbell/VTDigger

This Upcoming: Drug Enforcement Administration Hosts Pharmacy Diversion Awareness Conference

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is hosting a Pharmacy Diversion Awareness Conference (PDAC) in Manchester, New Hampshire on Sunday,

November 19th and Monday, November 20th from 8:00am to 5:00pm. The purpose of this seminar is to discuss the growing problem of pharmaceutical drug diversion, including education on identification and prevention of diversion. This conference is opened to registered pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy loss prevention personnel who work for DEA-registered pharmacies in the states of New Hampshire and Vermont. Upon completion of the conference, pharmacists and technicians may be eligible to earn up to 7 continuing education credits. Registration is free and can be accessed via this [link](#), and the agenda for the day can be found [here](#).

VPA Fall Social

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Vermont Pharmacist Association Fall Social

**Come join students and your fellow Vermont pharmacists at the
VPA Fall Social!**

November 2nd from 5 - 7pm at On Tap in Essex Junction

Vermont Board of Pharmacy Meeting

October 25th, 9:00am to 3:00pm

89 Main St., Montpelier, VT
Large Conference Room A

Mark Your Calendar! Important VPA Dates:

Vermont Pharmacists Day: Friday, January 26, 2018 at the Statehouse in Montpelier

VPA Spring Meeting: Sunday, February 25, 2018; Location TBD

VPA Fall Meeting: Sunday, September 23, 2018; Location TBD

FDA Approves New Antibacterial Drug

The Food and Drug Administration approved Vabomere (meropenem/vaborbactam) for adults with complicated urinary tract infections (cUTI,) including pyelonephritis. Safety and efficacy for Vabomere was established in a clinical trial of 545 adults with cUTI, including those with pyelonephritis. The drug was tested against Zosyn (piperacillin/tazobactam). 98% of patients treated with Vabomere showed cured/improved symptoms and a negative urine culture test, compared to 94% of patients treated with Zosyn. Approximately 7 days after completing treatment, approximately 77% of patients treated with Vabomere compared with approximately 73% of patients treated with Zosyn had resolved symptoms and a negative urine culture. Common adverse reactions in Vabomere were headache, infusion site reactions and diarrhea. Serious risks include allergic reactions and seizures. Vabomere should not be used in patients with a history of anaphylaxis towards beta-lactam antibiotics. Vabomere is designated as a qualified infectious disease product (QIDP) and received a [priority review](#).

[Read more](#)

Benefits and Safety of Gabapentinoids In Chronic Low Back Pain

Pregabalin and Gabapentin are frequently dispensed gabapentinoids that have demonstrated benefit in neuropathic pain conditions. Despite lack of evidence, they are increasingly used for non-specific Chronic Lower Back Pain (CLBP). Prolonged use of these drugs is associated with adverse effects and increased cost. This systematic review and meta-analysis aimed to assess the effectiveness and safety of gabapentinoids in adult CLBP patients. Electronic databases were searched to find randomized controlled trials reporting the use of gabapentinoids in adult CLBP patients with uses prolonging 3 months duration. Out of 1,385 citations, 8 studies were included. Based on interventions and comparators, studies were analyzed in 3 different groups. In studies comparing gabapentin to placebo, results showed minimal improvement of pain. Three studies compared pregabalin with other types of analgesic medication and showed greater improvement in the alternative analgesic medication group. Studies that used pregabalin as an adjuvant could not be properly pooled due to heterogeneity, but the largest of them showed no benefit of pregabalin as an add-on therapy to tapentadol. When compared with placebo, there was a higher incidence of dizziness, fatigue, difficulties with mentation, and visual disturbances in patients using gabapentin. In this meta-analysis and systematic

review, it was concluded that current “evidence on the use of gabapentinoids in CLBP is limited and demonstrates significant risk of adverse effects without any demonstrated benefit.” These drugs should be used with caution due to their adverse effects, lack of efficacy, and high financial costs of therapy.

[Read more](#)

Senator Sanders Promotes Importation of Canadian Pharmaceuticals

Early this year, Senator Bernie Sanders proposed an amendment that would have allowed importation of lower-priced pharmaceuticals into the states in an attempt to address rising drug prices. Sanders’ bill would require U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to allow wholesalers, pharmacies, and individuals to import prescription drugs at FDA-inspected facilities that are operated by licensed companies in Canada. In the policy statement, Senator Sanders stated that Canadian pharmaceutical manufacturing standards are already comparable to U.S. regulations. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that this bill could potentially save the U.S. government nearly \$7 billion over the next decade. Naturally, there has been pushback by stakeholders and even some former FDA commissioners, wondering if importation would increase safety risks. It is theorized that importation of prescription medications would ignore the dangerous threat to patients of counterfeit or adulterated medications, simply because these drugs are not directly approved by our government. However, it would not be the first time drugs were imported into the states. In instances of drug shortages, such as with the cancer drug Doxil in 2012, drugs have been brought into the states. Additionally, an estimated 8% of American consumers already buy prescription drugs from Canada, according to a poll by the Kaiser Family Foundations. Whether this is the solution to the rising drug prices or not, alternative strategies need to be found in order to provide Americans with more affordable medications.

[Read more](#)

Delaware Independents Are "Making A Comeback"

Pharmacists in Delaware say they are not worried about customers leaving their independent drug stores for the big chains like Walgreens or CVS. Owners say that when it comes to customer service, independent stores have a competitive edge. “There’s no way they’re going to beat a 70-year-old independent,” says community pharmacist and storeowner Jeff Smith, whose pharmacy has been around since 1948. “The only way they’ll take a patient away from me is when they force them to use their store.” And big chains are trying their hardest to bring customers into their

stores, including acquiring insurance companies, mail-order outlets, and pharmacy benefits managers. There is no denying that the big chains have effected business in the independent pharmacy sphere, however they seem to be making a comeback in the Delaware area, according to Kevin Musto, past president of the Delaware Pharmacists Society and independent pharmacy owner. The number of privately owned pharmacies in the state of Delaware has almost doubled in the past 10 years. How are these businesses thriving in the competition against big-box stores? A large component is thanks to the Affordable Care Act covering more prescription drugs, but also the added value of specialty services that an independent pharmacy can offer, such as compounding, pill packaging, free delivery, medical equipment, and medication reviews and counseling.

[Read more](#)

Hearing Aid Act Becomes Law

President Trump signed the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act as part of the FDA Reauthorization Act, which will make hearing aids for mild to moderate hearing loss affordable and accessible into local pharmacies. This new measure is expected to reduce OTC hearing aid prices to roughly one-tenth of traditional costs. Consumer Technology Association President and CEO Gary Shapiro will begin working with the FDA on quality-assurance measures that will allow consumers to easily distinguish the proper device for their hearing loss needs.

[Read more](#)

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