

January 2018

Volume IX, Issue I

Madeline Ciccone, Editor

Vermont Pharmacy News

Vermont Pharmacists' Day!

Come celebrate Vermont Pharmacists' Day on Wednesday, January 24th at the statehouse in Montpelier.

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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.

Article 2

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

[Read more](#)

VPA Fall Social

The VPA Fall Social was held at On Tap in

Essex. Thanks to all in attendance, including the VPA Student Chapter from Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences!



Article 3

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](#).

Vermont Board of Pharmacy Meeting

January 24th, 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

National Pharmacy News

Article 1

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](#)

Article 2

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](#)

article 3

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 adulterer 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](#)

article 4

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](#)

Article 5

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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