Two Ways to Save Lives

GR Health Pharmacy, which opened in May 2015, is an outpatient pharmacy inside Georgia Regents Medical Center. Aside from filling prescriptions for the community, GR Health Pharmacy offers a unique bedside delivery service, also known as “Meds to Beds.” This program involves the delivery of outpatient prescriptions to inpatients at their bedside. As a student working with this program, my main role was to obtain, fill, deliver, and counsel on discharge medications. This program is an innovative approach to enhancing transitions of care from the inpatient to outpatient settings.

In addition, because the pharmacy is located in the hospital, problems such as prior authorizations are able to be resolved before a patient is discharged. The process of communicating with in-house physicians and other healthcare providers is also much simpler with this process. “Meds to Beds” is a convenient service for this healthcare team and also for the patient. As healthcare shifts from quantity- to quality-based care, the “Meds to Beds” program hopes to improve patient satisfaction and quality measures, including Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores and star ratings. GR Health Pharmacy also hopes to decrease healthcare costs and readmission rates as this service becomes more utilized.

During my time at GR Health Pharmacy, I feel that I had a strong role in transitioning patients from inpatients to outpatients, and I actively contributed to high quality healthcare.

Written by: Hayley Hodgson (Augusta)
“Hostess City of the South”

Did you know that 21 of the 24 squares in the original city plan for Savannah still exist today? Each square has a unique story, and taken all together, they help make Savannah one of the most charming cities in the South. Coincidentally, there are also 21 bright and aspiring 4^th^ year University of Georgia College of Pharmacy students who will call Savannah home for the next year.

This year, Savannah’s main rotation sites include St. Joseph’s/Candler Health System, Memorial Health, Southeastern Geriatrics, Savannah VA Outpatient Clinic, LoCost Pharmacy, and Kroger Pharmacy. Previous APPE students in Savannah reported challenging preceptors and rewarding rotations. Just two rotations into the current APPE year, students are already expressing the same enthusiasm. Spencer Austin, who is on rotation with Dr. Ali Rahimi, M.D., at Southeastern Geriatrics, is beaming with excitement about his experience. He explains, “It’s awesome! Seeing the diagnostic process and getting a taste of the way physicians think about disease states will be invaluable to my career as a clinical pharmacist.”

What does the typical week look like outside of rotations? Among the countless tourist attractions, students have also found recreation in attending the Savannah Sand Gnats minor league baseball games, competing in trivia events, shopping at the brand new outlet mall, and hitting the links at one of the many local golf courses. Rakia Nasir, fourth-year Pharm.D. candidate, is currently working hard on an oncology rotation in nearby Hilton Head, South Carolina. She wants to make the most out of her year in the low country, stating, “It’s been great living so close to the beach. Also, the restaurant selection in Savannah is top notch. You can pick a new place for dinner on any given night and not be disappointed.”

It is a three and half hour drive from Savannah to Athens, close enough to make it up for a few Saturdays between the hedges. Other than that, we’re content to stay down here and welcome visitors to the “Hostess City of the South.”

Prepared for the Real World

In less than a year, the class of 2016 will end our careers as students and begin our careers as pharmacists. There are many things to consider when transitioning from a student to a healthcare professional. Dr. Don Tyson, Director of Pharmacy at Athens Regional Medical Center, has some advice on making the transition.

“Employers are not expecting experts,” he said. “Knowledge is important, but employers also look for someone with a humble presence who is flexible, works well with others, is willing to learn, and has a strong work ethic.” He cautioned against trying to show off or prove our knowledge. “Your knowledge and abilities will become evident,” he said.

Dr. Tyson advises us to look 10-15 years into the future, set a career goal for ourselves, and make decisions with that goal in mind. He urges us to answer honestly when asked what we want to do after graduation. “Don’t be afraid to make [your goals] known,” he said. “Think ahead and vocalize [your goals].” But there’s no need to look for the perfect job right away. Dr. Tyson believes, “You probably won’t stay at your first job forever.” He encourages students to be willing to sacrifice location, hours, or job title to put themselves in a position to achieve their ultimate goals.

Vaccine Update: Meningococcal B

Meningococcal disease caused by Neisseria meningitidis is a devastating infection, which usually affects children, young adults, and adults 65 or older. Healthy individuals can progress to death within a few hours after contracting the disease.

In the United States, serogroups B, C, and Y are responsible for the majority of meningococcal disease. The routine quadrivalent meningococcal vaccines cover serogroups A, C, Y, and W-135. In recent years, serogroup B Neisseria meningitidis (MenB) has become the most reported serogroup. It was the cause of four meningococcal outbreaks at Princeton University, the University of California - Santa Barbara, Providence College, and the University of Oregon during the past two years.

In response to these outbreaks, the Food and Drug Administration fast-tracked and approved two meningococcal B vaccines: Trumenba® by Pfizer in October 2014 and Bexsero® by Novartis in January 2015. Trumenba® requires 3 doses administered at 0, 2, and 6 months. Bexsero® requires 2 doses administered at least one month apart.

As of February 26, 2015, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) now recommends routine meningococcal B vaccination in high risk individuals aged ≥ 10 years including the following:

- Patients with persistent complement component deficiencies
- Patient with anatomical or functional asplenia
- Microbiologists routinely exposed to Neisseria meningitides
- Patients in close proximity to meningitis B outbreaks.

At their latest meeting on June 24, 2015, ACIP only recommended permissive use of meningococcal B vaccines in adolescents 16-23 years old with a preferred age of 16-18 years due to safety concerns. This recommendation ultimately leaves the vaccination decision up to doctors and their patients (references available on page 4).

Written by: Brent Sasaki (Savannah)

Written by: Lillian Otieno (Northeast GA)

Written by: Huong Pham (Columbus)
Food for Thought

Easy Cheesy Company Dip

Ingredients:
- ½ cup of mayonannaise
- 8 oz package of cream cheese, softened
- 1¼ cups of shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- Dash of cayenne pepper, tabasco, or sriracha to taste
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 8 crackers, crushed (Ritz, Cheez-its, Goldfish)

Optional mix-ins:
- ½ cup chopped green onions
- ½ cup of canned green chilies, pimentos, or jalapeños, drained
- 8 slices of bacon, cooked and crumbled

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F
2. In a medium bowl, mix together the mayonnaise, cream cheese, ⅓ cups of shredded cheese, cayenne pepper, salt, pepper, and any desired mix-ins
3. Transfer to a shallow baking dish or 9-inch pie pan
4. Top the mixture with cracker crumbs and ¼ cup of shredded cheese
5. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until heated through and slightly browned on top
6. Serve immediately with pita chips, crackers, and veggies of your choice

Written by: Alison Hunter (Atlanta)
References for “Vaccine Update: Meningococcal B”


- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Use of Serogroup B meningococcal vaccines in persons aged ≥ 10 years at increased risk for serogroup B meningococcal disease: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, 2015. MMWR 2015;64(No.22);608-612.
