



OUTREACH AND MESSAGING

Get the Message to the People!

The whole purpose of American Pharmacists Month (APhM) is to draw attention to your chapter's work and celebrate the pharmacy profession. That means sending the right messages to the right people and generating buzz for your events that creates the right impression. Whenever your chapter creates APhM materials, please visit APhA's Website (<https://pharmacistsmonth.com>) to use the logos, resources and tools. This will bring consistency to your messages message and save you time.

Make your promotions unique, informative, and memorable with APhA's marketing messages and promotions. In addition, please use the wide selection of products and patient education [brochures](#) from APhA's pharmacist.com and pharmacistsmonth.com websites. APhA's brochures are ideal for individual patient counseling, displays, health fairs, screenings, and presentations.

CELEBRATE FEDERAL PHARMACISTS & TECHNICIANS

Remembering Pharmacists Who Serve

Pharmacist organizations of each branch of the military can and do celebrate APhM. If you know pharmacists stationed overseas, send them a care package with APhM and other items to show your chapter's support.

For pharmacists within the United States Public Health Service and the Department of Veterans Affairs, why not schedule a day to give flu shots to your civilian counterparts as part of Operation Immunization? Or conduct brown bag medication review consults or educational sessions. This will give you an opportunity to demonstrate the valuable role that pharmacists play on the health care team.

Thank Technicians!

The third Tuesday of October is National Pharmacy Technician Day. Make an extra effort to thank technicians for their invaluable support and contributions throughout the year. Post pictures of your techs in the lobby. Give them a "thank you" lunch with a cake.

ENGAGE YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

APhM is the time to take your message on the road. Don't worry...you won't have to go far. There are countless opportunities in your local community. Patients of all ages can benefit from discussions and information about how to use medications safely and effectively.

Hit the Malls: Ask management at a local mall about staging an exhibit or booth where pharmacists and student pharmacists can answer shoppers' questions about medications.

Find the Traffic: Create a medication education display for your local library, YMCA or other popular community site.

Go Back to School: Visit neighborhood schools for a “show-and-tell,” a science or math class or a career day to talk with students about medication safety, the dangers of prescription abuse and exciting careers in pharmacy.

Reach Out to Seniors: Conduct “medication check-up” reviews or seminars at senior day-use centers.

Clarify Medicare for Seniors: Set aside time each day/week to answer questions about Medicare drug coverage for local seniors. Use the questions and your knowledge for a local newspaper column or call-in radio show. You can also offer personalized counseling by contacting your local office on aging (eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx).

Go with Groups: Civic, neighborhood, religious, even book groups—ranging from the Lions to the Junior League to Boys/Girls Scouting groups—are all good places to target for an educational talk on medication safety or the role of the pharmacist.

Make Time for Face Time: Schedule special events where patients can meet and talk to pharmacists and student pharmacists. Use the time to promote vaccinations, flu shots, or host screenings for cholesterol, diabetes or osteoporosis.

Check on Medication: Invite patients to bring all the prescription and nonprescription medications they take, so pharmacists can answer any questions and conduct a medication check-up for potential interactions, unneeded or duplicate medications, adverse reactions, and passed or upcoming expiration dates.

Host Local Leaders: Provide your legislators with an invaluable view of the contemporary roles of pharmacists. Make sure they talk to a patient who has benefitted from interaction with his or her pharmacist and get to watch a pharmacist in your facility conduct patient care services, like MTM, immunizations, patient education and wellness screenings.

Conduct OTC Aisle Tours: Gear them to specific groups, like parents, older adults and athletes. Help each group understand how to pick the right products for the conditions most likely to affect them. Emphasize the importance of reading labels, knowing the active ingredients and asking the pharmacist questions.

Join the Race: People interested in fitness and health activities are a built-in audience for the pharmacy message. Marathons, 5Ks and walkathons are excellent settings to spread the word. Choose ones that align with your message and be on hand with APhM giveaways, like water bottles, t-shirts, bandanas and headbands. Or if you’re feeling adventurous, you could organize your own race.

Get Cooking: Check local cooking classes that give instruction in cooking and nutrition for health issues such as diabetes, heart-healthy or allergies, and ask the instructor for five minutes to make a presentation about the importance of talking to your pharmacist and knowing about food/medication interactions.

Serve Healthy Lessons for Lunch: Ask local businesses if you can come in during employee lunch hours and make presentations about safe medication usage and answer medication-related questions.

Get Down to Business: Reach out to stores, restaurants and services in your block, mall or shopping center. Note: Chain stores may have restrictions about promotional activities, so start with independent, local businesses first:

- Approach restaurants about having a pharmacy awareness day where they promote healthy choices or give out material with the check.
- Work with local retail stores or dance and exercise studios to generate a month-long information or coupon promotion and exchange. Offer to promote their business in your store window or near your register if they put up an APhM static sticker.
- Create a “sidewalk sale” day where local businesses promote themselves outside their stores and you promote pharmacist-provided patient care services or offer mini-health screenings.

ENGAGE PATIENTS WITHIN THE HOSPITAL SETTING

Join the Class: Find out when diabetes, nutrition and prenatal classes are being held at your hospital or managed care setting throughout October. Check with the class organizers to see if they can give you time for a five-minute presentation on the importance of knowing their medications and talking to pharmacists.

Give Parting Gifts: Patients and class attendees are often given “care packages” when they leave the hospital. See if you can add an information card or fun giveaway for APhM promoting the importance of talking to pharmacists, especially for diabetes patients, heart patients, new parents and chemotherapy/cancer patients.

Make Rounds: Visit patients in their rooms. Introduce yourself and answer any questions they may have about pharmacy services, their current drug therapy or how to transition back to a normal medication routine when they leave the hospital. Give them patient education brochures and small American Pharmacists Month-themed giveaways, like magnets, pens and tote bags.

Set the Stage: Create a lobby display to promote the pharmacy department. Include information about pharmacy services and photos of your staff. If your facility is large, consider changing the display weekly to focus on a different pharmacy activity or function. Make the display colorful and fun, with eye-catching elements like red and white streamers or APhM balloons and banners.

Open Your Doors: Invite all hospital and managed care setting employees to visit the pharmacy. Conduct brief tours that showcase daily pharmacy operations and describe how medications move from the initial physician order to the patient.

Decorate Ambulatory Care Pharmacies: Hanging APhM decorations like banners, posters and balloons is a great way to publicize your events and draw attention to your pharmacy.

Offer Curbside Service: Encourage patients and caregivers to talk with pharmacists about medication therapy issues. Hold the sessions in a conference room or other relatively private area and allot from 5 to 10 minutes per person.

ENGAGE PATIENTS IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

Head to Class: Visit the fitness, nutrition, stretch, or dance class with the message that patients can talk to their pharmacist about how their fitness and movement activities affect their medications, and vice-versa.

Start a Project: Engage in a month-long project with facility residents, meeting once or twice a week with a clear goal and outcome. Here are some ideas:

- Create a cookbook with healthy recipes contributed by residents
- Create a short joke book with funny stories and jokes around the theme of “My Meds”
- Stage a talent show around the theme of “My Meds”

Share Information: Hold a visitor information day once a week during APhM, complete with an information table and giveaways, where visitors and relatives can get information about how your pharmacy works, meet the pharmacists and become aware of the importance of the pharmacists in their relatives’ health and well-being.

Open Your Doors: Invite all long-term care center employees to visit the pharmacy. Conduct brief tours that showcase daily pharmacy operations and describe how medications move from the initial physician order to the patient.

Throw a Party: Invite residents and their guests to a special APhM party. Maybe host an afternoon tea or other themed event. Decorate the designated areas with streamers and APhM balloons, banners and posters. Provide patient education brochures and small themed giveaways, like magnets and pens.

Make Rounds: Visit patients in their rooms. Introduce yourself and answer any questions they may have about pharmacy services or drug therapy. Give them patient education brochures and small APhM-themed giveaways.

Serve a Side of Advice: Develop lunch tray tent cards that explain the goals of the pharmacy and the services you offer residents. Encourage them to ask to speak with the pharmacist if they have any questions about their medication.

ATTRACT MEDIA COVERAGE

Attracting media attention requires a good story and good visual opportunities. Determine which media outlets you want most to reach, and tailor your work to what they need in order to appeal to readers and viewers. Also please make sure to speak with the Dean’s Office and your school’s Public Relations Office before contacting the media.

Step 1: Target your Media Outlets

- **Find the right size:** Local and personal stories appeal more to small and local media. Issue-based stories can warrant regional or national coverage.
- **Broaden your scope:** There’s more to coverage than a news story or feature in a particular show or section. Try letters to the editor, opinion pieces, radio talk shows and TV station editorial segments.

- **Don't limit yourself to health:** You might discover your story is more appropriately suited for the metro, business or lifestyle sections of a newspaper.
- **Know your reporters:** Check for particular writers, columnists or broadcast journalists who have covered pharmacy-related issues and take your stories to them first. Check the media outlet's website for contact information.

Step 2: Have a Good Story

What's special about your APhM celebration? Are you trying to get as many seniors as possible to an event? Are you spotlighting a pharmacist or student pharmacist with a strong relationship with patients? Are you looking at issues in the changing role or science in pharmacy? What are you most passionate about when it comes to pharmacy? What you care about is usually the seed for a story others will care about, too.

Media outlets want stories that are timely, interesting and full of local and personal appeal. APhA has tools such as pitch letters, news release samples, media advisories and media kits to help get your message out.

Step 3: Cultivate Media Relationships

Even in a short-term contact, a successful relationship with media outlets will go a long way toward accurate and compelling coverage. Here are some professional-caliber instructions to keep your work top quality:

- Send a pitch letter or email to your media list about 20 days in advance of an event.
- Prepare and send a media advisory the day before or the morning of an event. A follow-up phone call can help increase interest and attendance.
- Prepare a press release featuring greater detail. Releases help reporters write full stories.
- Assemble media kits to distribute at the event. Include the press release and information about your practice and the services it provides.
- Immediately after the event, distribute the release to members of the media unable to attend.
- Monitor the media for stories about your event. Send a thank-you to reporters who covered it.
- Keep copies of the press clippings to include in future media kits. See if you can get permission to post a video clip to social media.

UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is the easiest, fastest, and probably your favorite way to promote APhM events. But with social media, your message could get lost in a flood of information. Here are some tips for standing out and getting leverage. And remember...stick with APhA messages for best results.

Just the Facts: For the whole month, post a daily pharmacy fact, tip, link or an article to chapter's Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter accounts.

Tag It!: Use the Twitter hashtag #APhM2019 when tweeting about the profession, the month or your event. The more people who use a hashtag, the better chance it has at becoming a "trending topic." This then ups the chances that other non-pharmacy users will run across the information.

Let Facebook Help: If you're hosting a special event in honor of APhM, spread the word through Facebook. It makes it easy to send invites and for attendees to share the event with friends. It's also a neat way for attendees to see the guest list of who's going (which helps get them to the page!).

Get Visual: Get out your smart phone and start shooting and posting photos of events. Three things to remember: Ask permission, use captions, and check before tagging.

Document with Video: Create a serious record of your events that others can learn from, or try a short, fun video with music or voice-overs. Once you've asked permission, post away.

Insta and Pin Up: Consider these ideas for Instagram and Pinterest using visual-based posts to share APhM tips and information:

- Recipes for people with diabetes, allergies or other chronic conditions
- A poster showing flavors available for children's medications
- Ideas on storing or remembering medications
- A calendar for medications or a tip of the day
- Photos of pharmacists/student pharmacist providing patient care services
- GIF videos or images of food and drugs that may interact
- Don't forget to fill in the description box with extra information

Get Personal with a Blog: If you don't have a blog already, APhM is a great time to start one. Or use a group blog where contributors rotate. Use this month to write about your work or what the profession means to you, or to share tips with students or professionals on continuing education or career advancement. A blog is an easy, relatable way to talk about the profession. Posts can be short and informal—the key is keeping the content fresh and consistent.

Record a Podcast: This is a great way to address an issue in pharmacy that's important to you. A podcast is typically a short-recorded audio session, and it's easy to do through the microphone on your computer. Try talking about pharmacy, interviewing a patient or colleague, or describing how pharmacists can help someone with a certain condition, such as diabetes.

Add a Twitter Widget: If people are already talking about the event, why not use that as proof to market to other potential attendees? The widget is a box that allows users to scroll through just the tweets relevant to your event (with your hashtag).

Build the Excitement: Are you able to give away some free tickets to your upcoming event, or offer freebies or prizes? Social media is particularly conducive to building excitement around things like giveaways. It encourages people to share/retweet/repost—and it will up the awareness of your event.

Capture the Experts: Will your upcoming events feature interesting or popular speakers? Get your social media audience acquainted with them—and excited to hear more. Promote their appearance before the event, and get permission to post content, a report, or a video of their presentation or a Q&A.

Invite Leaders: Most senators and representatives now use social media tools. Contact your local legislators via social media and invite them publicly to attend your events.