

2020 Technician Educational Forum Recap

by Shelby Van Engel, CPhT

The PSW Technician Educational Forum is a wonderful opportunity provided to pharmacy technicians in Wisconsin each year and 2020 is no exception! Even with the COVID pandemic in the midst, PSW pushed on and allowed the Technician Forum to be launched virtually for the first time. We are so fortunate to have the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin to host such an event, and thank you to all of the volunteers and speakers who helped put this event on virtually rather than cancelling.

We had 34 registered attendees, and 6 staff/volunteers attend the live conference on Friday, October 23rd, 2020 hosted by Zoom. The conference began shortly after 1:00pm, and was kicked off by PSW Technician Section Immediate Past President, Miranda Peek. The Zoom software gave attendees the opportunity to chat with one another privately, or as a whole group, which was a wonderful way for attendees to network, even in a virtual setting. Shortly after the conference started, Miranda revealed the PSW Pharmacy Technician of the Year, Gabby Gaura, from Streu's Pharmacy in Green Bay. We then had the pleasure of meeting the new 2020-2021 Technician Section Board, and hear them be installed. The 2020-2021 Technician Section Board is as follows:

- Sarah Raether, President
- Miranda Peek, Past President
- Miranda Wagner, President Elect
- Carrie Plier, Secretary
- Shelby Van Engel, Region A Director
- Barbara Ranzenberger, Region B Director
- Joseph Santilli, Region C Director
- Jennifer McLarty, Region D Director
- Karen Suchon, Region E Director
- Jennifer Leitner, Region F Director

Sarah Raether then gave quite the uplifting speech, giving attendees a bode of confidence to continue on through the upcoming year, while also thanking

each of us for our role, duties, sacrifices, and successes over the course of the past year especially through the pandemic. Her speech was truly inspiring, and really helped attendees feel that they are valued, and a very important part of the health care system. Sarah stated, "I hope the takeaway from this conference is that without you, Pharmacy would not exist" along with later in her speech, "This is our year to shine!" Such true and memorable statements are truly inspiring for each and every technician no matter their role within Pharmacy.

The virtual platform was then handed off to Ali Godin, Certified Life Coach. Ali is from Wisconsin, but now lives in Florida. As Ali's career evolved with Disney, she was consumed by the fast pace business world and struggled to keep up on her own personal self-care. In 2018, Ali decided to re-evaluate her life style, and decided to put joy first. After the completion of her own path to happiness she started her own business "Ful Life Coaching" and is a very successful life coach helping others on their journey to fulfill joy and happiness. Ali put on a wonderful presentation, "Living a Ful Life during a Pandemic, Professionally and Personally." Ali explained that there are seven steps to leading a "Ful Life", and those steps are: Self-Exploration, Blocks, Options, Planning, Research & Testing, Sustaining Change, and Mastering Skills. Along with explaining these skills to us, Ali also took time to explain to attendees how to make SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Specific) goals. SMART goals are so important in the world of pharmacy, as it helps ensure that the goals we have are best for our patients and will actually have an overall impact on the world of health care and for technicians specifically, the world of pharmacy.

After Ali's wonderful presentation, the conference moved onto breakout groups, where we got to network and meet with fellow technicians. The members of the technician board spent much time asking technicians how things are going with

the pandemic, and technician's struggles. The board also asked technician's what they as a board could do to help. They provided the opportunity for technician's to ask each other for advice on situations or struggles taking place in their current pharmacies. Additionally, the other session spent time asking technician's how they feel the pandemic has affected their roles in pharmacy, and where and how they would like to see the technician role expand in the future. Mainly, what roles they would like to be added to the technician scope of practice. Technicians were very responsive and open, and it was a great experience to get to network and share ideas amongst one another.

In past years, the conference then would have broken out into educational sessions, in which attendees could pick and choose certain sessions to attend. This year, with the conference being virtual attendees had the opportunity to view all six educational sessions online on their own time. There were six educational sessions (or CE's) offered:

1. Opioids: Past, Present, and Future (A review for Pharmacy Technicians)
2. Diversion: Awareness and Prevention
3. Sterile Compounding: A Review
4. Research Basics – You Can Do This!
5. Pulse on Wisconsin Provider Status: An Update for Pharmacy Technicians
6. Changes to Telehealth in Wisconsin in 2020

All of these presentations are great educational resources for pharmacy technicians, and will have great value to their respective pharmacy's work flow. PSW did a wonderful job ensuring a mix of presentations in this year's sessions. They ensured that there were presentations that apply to all pharmacy settings, such as the Opioids, Diversion, Research, Provider Status, and Telehealth Sessions. They also threw in a session about Sterile Compounding, which although specific to a few pharmacy settings, is also a great

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refresher to those of us in retail, or non-compounding pharmacy settings. These educational opportunities are much appreciated, and are truly vital for the technician role overall in pharmacy.

As technicians, we all have at least one example of times where health care professions, employers, the general public, or sometimes even our families, don't understand the role we as technicians play in the overall health care system. Although PSW has made, and continues to make amazing leaps and strides to bridge this gap, we all as technicians have times where we are undervalued, or not understood. Our education as technicians is the base of narrowing this gap even more. This conference each year is one of the biggest opportunities for growth technicians have. The experiences, education, and connections from this conference each and every year are a vital part to a technician's individual growth. Technicians leave this conference having grown individually with skills, education, leadership, and confidence to implement into their daily workflow, and patient care. For those technicians that missed out this year, make sure to sign up for the 2021 Technician Educational

Forum!

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