

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN SCHOOL OF PHARMACY STUDENT WRITING CLUB:

Leadership Spotlight: Dr. Anita Kashyap, PharmD

by Dani K. Oelerking, 2022 PharmD Candidate



Editor's Note:

Since this article was written, Anita Kashyap has accepted a new position at the Madison VA as a Clinical Pharmacy Manager for Specialty Ambulatory Care and Investigational Drug Research and splits her time between that role and direct patient care in clinic.

Anita Kashyap, PharmD, BCACP is a clinical pharmacy specialist at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital (Madison VA). After graduating from the UW Madison School of Pharmacy in 2012, she accepted a post-graduate year 1 and year 2 residency in ambulatory care at the Madison VA. She originally started with the VA as a pharmacy technician in 2007 and has been building her career within the VA community since. Not only does she direct patient care as a provider, but she also works with her fellow staff as an ambulatory care clinical lead. Kashyap says that, in a typical week, she acts as a clinical pharmacist for three days and as a clinical lead for two. As a clinical pharmacist, she performs comprehensive medication services in both the primary care clinic and the heart failure clinic. As a clinical lead, she works on innovative practice changes and expansions of the ambulatory care clinical pharmacy services offered at the Madison VA. She manages program activities and provides leadership support for the ambulatory care clinical pharmacy specialists.

As an ambulatory care clinical lead, Kashyap has been working on developing local policies that meet national VA standards. She has also helped lead practice expansion efforts at the Madison VA, like integrating a pharmacist into the pulmonary clinic and restructuring the transplant pharmacy program to ensure that the pharmacists are meeting national policies. Most recently, she has been co-leading a project to increase COVID vaccinations in veterans who belong to a minority group. Her role in this population health initiative was to help train staff on how to approach

patients about receiving the vaccines and assist with the evaluation analysis. Throughout this project, Kashyap and her team have reached out to over 1,300 veterans to help them receive the COVID vaccines.

Although Kashyap states that she never expected to hold a leadership role, she gained a lot of respect for the position during one of her fourth-year experiential rotations at the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW). While continuing her relationship with PSW as a clinical pharmacist, she has gained leadership experience by participating in conferences, speaking at various conferences, proctoring the yearly Wisconsin Pharmacy Residency Conference, and revising the heart failure toolkit. Her advice to future and current pharmacists is to “have experience yourself if you are going to manage others.” Kashyap also feels that managers should be able to give good feedback and receive it.

Along with being a PSW member, Kashyap also serves on the Ambulatory Care Advisory Committee for PSW. She is involved with multiple projects, including developing the PSW Ambulatory Care Advisory Committee Podcast. In this podcast, each episode focuses on pertinent ambulatory care pharmacy practice topics and is hosted by PSW members across the state of Wisconsin.

Accomplishments

Throughout her 14 years of work with the Madison VA, Kashyap's greatest professional achievement was being part of the team to receive the VA's first Clinical Pharmacy Practice Office (CPPO) PACT Clinical Pharmacy Platinum Practice Designation in June of 2020. The national

VA Pharmacy Benefits Management CPPO established the platinum designation to recognize the sites that have created innovative practices that maximize the impact of the PACT model, and specifically the integration of the clinical pharmacist provider. This award is presented to sites that have creative and innovative pharmacy practices with an integrated team-based care model. She says “it was truly a humbling moment” to be recognized for not only having a great team of pharmacists, but having a great team of staff working together at the Madison VA.

Kashyap is also proud of being selected to attend the PSW Pharmacy Leadership Conference in 2019 where she was able to surround herself with others who were also passionate about leadership, while developing her skills. After applying to attend this conference in 2017 and being accepted as the first alternate, she decided to make it a goal to be invited to attend in the future. Two years later, she met her goal. Her advice to others is to understand that career goals may change or not go the way you've planned, but that is okay. She feels that attending the 2019 Leadership Conference had more impact for her than it would have in 2017. She says that, even if you are not in a leadership position, you should still strive to be a leader by finding opportunities to participate and to let your voice be heard. Some of her favorite examples: volunteer to speak at a conference; volunteer to do a project within your work group; and volunteer to lead a patient care team. Kashyap believes that by stepping out of your comfort zone, you are opening the door to new opportunities. She

says challenging herself to complete tasks outside of her comfort zone gave her the biggest opportunities for growth.

Concerns Today

Kashyap is grateful for the opportunities that she has had at the Madison VA, including having a provider status, which most pharmacists within other organizations do not have. She understands that there is a definite challenge for current pharmacists being recognized as direct patient care providers. Although she does not see this challenge at the Madison VA, she observes these challenges while working with PSW. She hopes that, 10 years from now, all pharmacists will be able to work to the top of their license with provider status. She believes that all pharmacists should be using their clinical knowledge and collaborating with other healthcare professionals to offer the best health care to every patient. Under the leadership of PSW, she believes that there is a strong foundation of support for provider status from not only the organization itself, but from every Wisconsin pharmacist who is a PSW member. Kashyap says that this support should extend not only to fellow pharmacists but to other health care professionals. This will help promote awareness and support for provider status across the health care field. Kashyap knows

that it has been a challenge reaching this status, but she believes that we could make a big impact in our communities just by building relationships and collaborating with providers outside of our own profession. This practice is why she thinks that she and her pharmacy colleagues are recognized and treated as core members of the healthcare team at the Madison VA. She says, “advocacy is key!” All pharmacists must continue to advocate for themselves and encourage support from those outside of the pharmacy profession.

Advice for Future Leaders

As Kashyap reflects on her career as a clinical lead, her advice for future leaders is to set goals, find opportunities to achieve those goals, and acknowledge that your goals may evolve as you progress through your career. She wants to remind everyone not to feel discouraged if their career path changes, and to take every opportunity to establish personal and professional growth. She lists as mentors her colleagues at the Madison VA, especially her supervisor (and PSW President), Ellina Seckel, who Kashyap says is a great listener to her staff's needs, and gives them all the opportunity to succeed. Seckel has opened a lot of doors for Kashyap, specifically her leadership role as a clinical pharmacist lead. Kashyap also recalls looking up to Professor Orly Vardeny, who

always presented opportunities in an open teaching style to connect with students and encourage them to reach for the stars. When her career path started to change, Vardeny encouraged Kashyap to embrace the change.

Kashyap says that she is always trying to go above and beyond in every patient and student interaction she has, because she feels it's important to pay it forward from those mentors who have invested a lot into her. She is also a preceptor for APPE students from the UW-Madison School of Pharmacy as well as PGY1 and 2 ambulatory care residents at the Madison VA. She is very proud to be a mentor to others, as she was named residency program preceptor of the year in 2018. She says that, if she started her career all over again, she would be more confident earlier in her career to reach a leadership position sooner. Kashyap believes every pharmacist should recognize their strengths and dive into them, even if the path they indicate isn't what they had originally planned. She says she would have signed up for smaller opportunities along the way to help guide her to her current career path.

Dani Schmaus is a 2022 Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate at the Medical College of Wisconsin School of Pharmacy in Milwaukee, WI.

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