

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON SCHOOL OF PHARMACY STUDENT WRITING CLUB:

# Pharmacy Leadership Spotlight: Xin Ruppel

by Stacie Stone, 2021 Pharmacy Candidate, Baylee Gorges 2021 Pharmacy Candidate

**D**r. Ruppel received her dual degree of PharmD and MBA in 2007 from Drake University. She is currently a Pharmacy Manager at Family Health Center Pharmacy located in Marshfield, Wisconsin. With experience at a community health center, Dr. Ruppel expressed the importance of having an integrative environment in which interprofessional collaboration is a key component to the provision of care. She has been serving the rural community of Wisconsin since her graduation and continually innovates and expands services to provide improved access.

Her current role revolves around

providing strategic leadership for pharmacy services, providing prescription fulfillment and comprehensive medication therapy. She manages a 20 member team and still finds time to precept students. Her overall mission is to serve underserved patients in rural Wisconsin whether it is with the help of her team or molding future pharmacists.

## Pursuit of Innovation

A key piece of advice Dr. Ruppel shared was that you never know where your next opportunity comes from. Dr. Ruppel was the first PGY-1 resident in Ambulatory Care at Marshfield Clinic Health System. Her residency opened doors for the creation of new roles. She started as a

Special Projects Coordinator, to assistant manager, to her current role as manager of the Family Health Center Pharmacy.

Fast forwarding to her current role which involves a closed door mail out pharmacy where telephonic care and telephonic communication play an important role in providing high quality care to her patients. Within this position, Dr. Ruppel utilizes telephonic communication to develop and provide comprehensive medication therapy management for underserved, uninsured, and/or underinsured patients under the scope of the program.

Dr. Ruppel has been involved in many projects revolving around expanding the

*Below: Dr. Ruppel's team at Family Health Center Pharmacy in Marshfield, WI.*



role of the pharmacist through telehealth, including being a co-investigator for the ROPE-Asthma study. The purpose of this study was to assess the feasibility, acceptability, and impact of a telepharmacy intervention on rural patients diagnosed with asthma. Overall the results from the study showed utilization of telehealth and pharmacist communication with patients in the rural setting can decrease barriers and improve care for patients with asthma. Many of the tools learned in the pilot has translated to care for patients with other chronic conditions.

### Expanding Access to Patients of Rural Wisconsin

Transportation, lack of resources, public perception of pharmacists, and the geographic distance are just a few of the barriers Dr. Ruppel has identified while providing healthcare in a rural area. A major barrier that rural patients face is transportation. Many factors can create transportation difficulty for patients to receive their vital medications such as the unpredictable winter months in northern Wisconsin or the mileage needed to drive to the nearest pharmacy.

When transportation and lack of resources started interfering with her ability to provide optimal patient care, she focused on the need and value of provision of telephonic comprehensive

medication therapy management. Telehealth is changing the concept of community pharmacy as we integrate new technology, expand the scope of pharmacy technicians, and increase the amount of time pharmacists spend providing clinical information. Overall the use of telehealth allows the pharmacists to maintain relationships with their patients despite geographic separation. Dr. Ruppel and team continually evaluate their work to innovate ways to be part of the solution to the problem of access to care.

### Advice to Future Leaders of Pharmacy

To current pharmacy students, Dr. Ruppel emphasizes the importance of finding a support system professionally and personally throughout pharmacy experiences. Let relationships happen organically through preceptors, managers, colleagues, faculty, etc. Surround yourself with people willing to advocate for you and support your goals. Gravitate towards your strengths and interests but do not be opposed to branch out and be open to possibilities you have never given a chance. Dr. Ruppel states she would not be where she was today without preceptors, managers, directors, and fellow team members willing to listen to and support her ideas and initiatives from the ground up.

Dr. Ruppel values her contributions to pharmacy care in rural Wisconsin as well as her role in advancing the field of pharmacy. She recommends to be engaged in the progression of pharmacy through experiences in professional organizations and conferences. Dr. Ruppel's involvement with student learning stems back to establishing her site as a rotation location for students. She is a vital aspect of student learning and continually contributes to mentorship of students and residents. She emphasizes the importance of staying humble and paying it forward to future pharmacy students by being a preceptor and creating those relationships.

Throughout her career, Dr. Ruppel exemplifies the importance of being a true leader in pharmacy. Her passion and drive to resolve barriers to patients receiving health care in rural Wisconsin is an inspiring example of how future leaders can use their own passions and interests to progress pharmacy forward.

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Stacie Stone and Baylee Gorges are 4th Year Doctor of Pharmacy Candidates at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy in Madison, WI.

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