

PHARM CIRCLE

Connecting stories from Memorial's PharmD for Working Professionals Program

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**Advance your practice,
Lead your profession**

*Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)
for Working Professionals*

From the Dean's Desk

Dr. Shawn Bugden

This is the 14th publication of the Pharm Circle newsletter. This issue is all about our Working Professionals students, both past and present. At February (in-absentia) and Spring convocations this year, 11 students conferred their degree. We proudly welcome them to our alumni pharmily and wish them success in all their professional and personal pursuits.



This past May, several students came to campus to participate in their second clinical skills course. They enjoyed the hands-on learning and spending time together in-person, though the icebergs may have eluded them during their visit.

We catch up with program alumnus, Dr. Jeremy MacDonald, who is now an instructor at Dalhousie University College of Pharmacy. He credits the program with helping him provide enhanced patient care and appreciates pharmacists being able to practice to full scope in Canada.

We also share the stories of six students. Hailing from the 2021 to 2025 cohorts, they are at different stages of program completion. These students are working hard in the classroom and the clinic to expand their pharmacist toolkit and optimize the services they provide to help patients. They are busy pharmacists and students with diverse clinical interests and are excited for what the future holds.

As the Working Professionals Program winds down, we bid farewell to three first-year courses and know they helped give students the foundation to succeed as they progress through their PharmD journey.

We appreciate you taking the time to read our newsletter and wish you a restful and rewarding summer ahead.



Catching up with program alumnus:

Dr. Jeremy MacDonald
(PharmD, 2022)

Jeremy considered two careers when he was in high school: education (to nurture young minds) and pharmacy (to help people with medications). An encounter with medicated lollipops may have swayed his decision to become a pharmacist.

The power of a lollipop

As a child, Jeremy enjoyed visiting pharmacists when he needed a prescription. Encouraged by his parents, he talked to them directly and thought they were friendly, caring and knowledgeable. In high school, he attended a School of Pharmacy webinar where pharmacy students talked about making medicated lollipops for children at the Janeway Children's Hospital as a way to encourage them to take their medicine. He thought it was brilliant. This encounter was one of the impetuses of why he became a pharmacist.

Jeremy completed his first pharmacy degree at Memorial University in 2017 and returned a few years later to pursue his Doctor of Pharmacy degree, graduating in 2022. He is currently an instructor at Dalhousie University College of Pharmacy in Halifax. He also practices community pharmacy on a part-time basis in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and finds time to do consults and precept APPE students at Dalhousie's School of Social Work Community Clinic. He wears many pharmacy hats all due, in part, to a lollipop.

Pharmacist influencers

When Jeremy was completing his first pharmacy degree, many of his professors returned to school to obtain a PharmD and he found their practice areas inspiring. He was also motivated by his pharmacy preceptor and mentor, Kathy King, who also pursued a PharmD. She encouraged him to consider the Working Professionals Program. He credits her mentorship over the years as being a motivating factor in obtaining his own PharmD, ultimately helping lead him down a rewarding and successful career path.

Impeccable timing

The same week Jeremy began his PharmD program in 2019, he also started working at the School of Pharmacy's Medication Therapy Services (MTS) Clinic. He says it was a synergistic experience learning from his courses and applying it to his pharmacist consults at both the MTS Clinic and in his part-time community practice. He credits the program with helping him enhance his patient care services during that time.

Impactful learning

Jeremy completed a six-week placement at a diabetes services clinic while in the program. It was an invaluable learning experience and exposed him to the types of services a diabetes educator provides. He learned about assessment with continuous glucose monitors in greater detail than what he knew from a community pharmacy perspective. He learned about dietary education and had the opportunity to educate patients about newer evidence-based medications and recommendations for diabetes care optimization. This led to increased confidence in providing patient care and collaborating with other health care providers. It also enhanced his practice for triaging patients in community pharmacy who ultimately benefit from these referrals for education and guidance from a certified diabetes educator.

Jeremy enjoyed both of the program's clinical rotations and gained new skills in diabetes, primary care, and long-term care. He learned from nurse practitioners, dieticians, and

physicians who helped expand his approach to patient care. This is evident in his current role where he works with social workers and learns about their approach so that he can try to incorporate it into the way he approaches patient care and teaching.

He says, “pharmacists often think alike and are all trained in the pharmacist-patient care process. But expanding knowledge of how other health care providers approach care can help equip pharmacists for different situations and improve their understanding of other health systems and ways to collaborate”.

Being an instructor and a preceptor, Jeremy stresses the value of collaboration with other health care providers. He uses examples of how pharmacists can interact with others to improve patient care and aid in system navigation, especially for patients who do not have a primary care provider. Completing a PharmD aided his practice, which, in turn, enhanced his ability to teach on the pillar of collaboration.

Excitement for the profession

After completing his first pharmacy degree in 2017, he was frustrated by the limitations in his practice which impacted his ability to provide patient care.

Pharmacy practice is continuously evolving across Canada. He was excited to move to and practice in Nova Scotia post-PharmD where the scope of practice continues to expand, breaking down barriers for pharmacists to provide care. This allows pharmacists to provide more effective and safer medications and improve adherence to their medication regimen. It also helps reduce the strain on other healthcare systems that would have to be accessed if pharmacists were unable to practice to appropriate scope. He says, “it is always rewarding when you can provide care to your full scope and see the positive impact it has on patients.”

Words of encouragement

Jeremy knows how fast time goes by. He encourages students to enjoy their time in the program, ask questions, and soak up the knowledge. He believes the program has many opportunities for students to apply knowledge and provide improved patient care to those in their circle of care. Learning about a topic and then applying it to practice shortly thereafter was one of his favorite parts of being a

PharmD student. Networking and getting to know classmates can also provide opportunities to learn about other practices and approaches to patient care, which only helps expand a pharmacist’s toolkit.

Coming full circle

Though Jeremy initially choose a career in pharmacy, he somehow found his way into a classroom six years after becoming a pharmacist. When he completed his PharmD degree, he accepted a position at Dalhousie University. He teaches in the problem-based learning curriculum, focusing on areas such as substance disorders, lipids, pain, GI, and travel health. Bridging the two career paths he once considered in high school (education and pharmacy) seems serendipitous now or maybe it was always meant to be.

On a personal note, Jeremy welcomed a puppy into this life three years ago. Passionate about being a pharmacist, it is not surprising that his profession inspired her name, calling her Remi (short for ‘remedy’). Those who know the unconditional love of a dog will understand how fitting her name really is. Being a super friendly and happy pup, Remi has a special gift of making people smile and spreads happiness wherever she goes, particularly on visits to the clinic and to campus.

Remedies come in many forms, like pills and lollipops; but sometimes a prescription of four paws and fur can make any day just a little bit brighter.



Remi (with Jeremy) spreading happiness in Grey River, NL

Students in the Spotlight

2021 Cohort Nishi Gupta

Born in India and raised in Saudi Arabia, Nishi immigrated to Canada with her family at the age of 18. Within two weeks of arriving, she began her post-secondary education at the University of Waterloo, an institution that was a part of one of the most influential chapters of her life.

Nishi completed her Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Waterloo and was a member of the university's third graduating class. She was the first undergraduate research student at the School of Pharmacy under the supervision of Dr. Marianna Foldvari. Looking back, she credits her time at Waterloo with fostering her curiosity, love of learning, and willingness to embrace unexpected opportunities.

Nishi often describes herself as an "accidental pharmacist." Her introduction to the profession came through a part-time job as a front-store clerk in a community pharmacy. Having grown up in regions where pharmacists primarily focused on dispensing medications, she was fascinated by the clinical role pharmacists play in North America. What started as a student job quickly evolved into a rewarding and fulfilling career.

She started off in community pharmacy and transitioned to oncology pharmacy at Health Sciences North in Sudbury, Ontario. As the largest hospital in Northern Ontario, Health Sciences North serves a vast geographic region and a diverse patient population. Much like pharmacy itself, oncology was not part of her original plan. However, it quickly became a specialty she could not imagine leaving. She finds oncology pharmacy challenging, humbling, and intellectually stimulating, offering endless opportunities to learn while helping patients navigate some of the most difficult moments of their lives.

A self-proclaimed lifelong learner, Nishi enrolled in the PharmD for Working Professionals Program at Memorial University to further expand her clinical knowledge and challenge herself professionally. The program exceeded her expectations. Beyond the academic content, one of the most rewarding aspects was connecting with pharmacists from across Canada and learning about the diverse ways pharmacy is practiced.

We like to celebrate our students and will share student profiles in every issue.



From classmates who owned independent pharmacies in small rural communities to colleagues managing addiction-focused pharmacy services in British Columbia, every interaction broadened her perspective and enriched her learning experience.

As an oncology pharmacist, Nishi is passionate about teaching and mentoring future healthcare professionals. She regularly works with pharmacy students and residents and enjoys helping learners build confidence in their clinical decision-making skills. She particularly enjoys seeing students discover interests they never expected to pursue—something she can relate to. She hopes to inspire more learners to consider oncology pharmacy as a career path and to appreciate the unique blend of science, compassion, and lifelong learning that the specialty offers.

Following graduation, Nishi plans to continue advancing her oncology practice while remaining actively involved in teaching, mentorship, and professional development. She believes some of the most meaningful opportunities in life are the ones never planned for.

Outside work, Nishi enjoys exploring the outdoors and taking on new hiking challenges. To date, her proudest accomplishment is completing Silver Peak in Ontario's Killarney Provincial Park. While the breathtaking views from the summit made the hike worthwhile, she insists that the trail was "uphill both ways." When she's not at work, in class, or on a hiking trail, she can usually be found looking for her next learning opportunity—because for Nishi, curiosity has always been the best guide.



2022 Cohort

Abigail Turner

Originally from Prince Edward Island, Abigail Turner moved to Newfoundland and Labrador to pursue a pharmacy degree at Memorial University. She graduated from the School of Pharmacy in 2016 and later completed a Master of Science in Pharmacy.

During her graduate studies, Abigail worked as a pharmacy skills teaching assistant, an experience that helped spark her interest in pharmacy education. After completing her master's degree, she worked as a pharmacy skills lab instructor at Memorial University while also practicing in community pharmacy on a part-time basis. These experiences allowed her to be involved in research, academia, and clinical practice and helped shape her interest in pursuing a PharmD.

Abigail decided to complete a PharmD to expand future opportunities in teaching and clinically focused pharmacy roles. To help connect her coursework to real world patient care, she increased her time in practice by transitioning into full-time community pharmacy in a rural setting. During this time, she continued to grow professionally and progressed into a leadership role as Pharmacist-in-Charge.

Although balancing the PharmD program with work, life, and career changes required commitment, Abigail found the program flexible and manageable for

working professionals. She appreciated that the learning was practical and relevant, allowing her to apply many of the concepts and skills directly to her practice and, later, to her advanced pharmacy practice experience (APPE) placements.

Throughout the program, Abigail developed a strong interest in chronic kidney disease and dialysis. One of the highlights of her PharmD experience was completing an APPE placement in nephrology. She had the opportunity to work in the dialysis unit where she collaborated closely with the nurse practitioner, applied her clinical knowledge by reviewing lab results, and assisted with medication adjustments. This experience strengthened her interest in hospital pharmacy and further confirmed her desire to pursue nephrology-focused practice.

Abigail is currently on maternity leave after welcoming her baby girl on April 19. She was grateful to complete both of her APPE placements during the winter semester, just before her daughter was born, and is thankful for the role the PharmD program played in helping her transition toward hospital practice.

When Abigail's maternity leave ends in 2027, she will return to work in a new position at James Paton Memorial Regional Health Centre in Gander. She is excited for this opportunity and plans to continue developing her clinical practice, particularly in nephrology. Looking ahead, Abigail hopes to eventually return to teaching in some capacity and continue combining her interests in clinical practice, education, and lifelong learning. Outside of pharmacy, she is currently enjoying and navigating life as a new mom.

2023 Cohort *Lauren Page*

Lauren Page is a hospital pharmacist based in Nova Scotia and currently works in emergency medicine at Valley Regional Hospital. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy at Dalhousie University in 2018 before pursuing her PharmD degree at Memorial University.

Throughout her career, Lauren has developed a strong interest in clinical pharmacy practice (particularly in emergency medicine) and in providing evidence-based support to both patients and healthcare professionals. In addition to her clinical role, she is involved in helping educate pharmacists in Nova Scotia by researching and answering clinical questions from colleagues.

Lauren decided to pursue a PharmD degree in 2023 because she wanted to strengthen her clinical knowledge and expand her ability to contribute to patient care. The Working Professionals Program allowed her to continue practicing while advancing her education and connected her with pharmacists from a wide range of practice settings across Canada.

On May 28, 2026, Lauren graduated from the program, conferring her Doctor of Pharmacy degree during spring convocation. Completing the program while balancing work and personal responsibilities was both rewarding and challenging. She managed a demanding schedule that included working multiple jobs, completing her studies, and navigating major life milestones, including purchasing a home. Despite the challenges of juggling life's roles and responsibilities,



she credits the experience with helping her grow both professionally and personally.

One of the most valuable aspects of the program for Lauren was the ability to immediately apply what she was learning to real clinical practice. She also appreciated the connections built with classmates who shared a commitment to lifelong learning and advancing pharmacy practice.

Following graduation, Lauren plans to continue working in hospital pharmacy with a focus on emergency medicine and clinical education. She hopes to continue supporting learners and contributing to the profession through mentorship and knowledge sharing.

Outside of pharmacy, Lauren enjoys spending time with her partner, Justin, as well as with friends and family. She is an avid Taylor Swift fan, enjoys gardening and spending time at home with her cat, Marlo. She also holds a second-degree black belt in taekwondo.



2024 Cohort

Marwa Alshaiqli

Colleagues describe her as a strong communicator and problem-solver who brings both clinical expertise and genuine kindness to her work.

Seeking to deepen her clinical knowledge and better support patients, Marwa transitioned into hospital practice with Hamilton Health Sciences. In this role, she focuses on careful medication order review, resolving drug therapy problems, and monitoring treatments for effectiveness and safety. She is particularly interested in optimizing medication therapy for patients with complex medical needs and improving the safety and quality of medication use across the continuum of care. Her commitment to lifelong learning and to providing the best possible care for her patients led her to enroll in the PharmD for Working Professionals Program at Memorial University, where she continues to strengthen her skills in advanced pharmacotherapy, critical thinking, and leadership, while providing direct patient care.

Marwa finds balance by staying active and exploring the world. She loves travelling, especially discovering new cities and walking through beautiful landscapes, whether along a waterfront trail or in a quiet garden. Cruises are one of her favorite ways to travel because they combine her love of the ocean with the excitement of waking up somewhere new. She enjoys boxing to relieve stress, and regular walks help her clear her mind after a busy shift. Marwa also loves bringing people together, whether it is planning small gatherings with colleagues or organizing potlucks to share food and stories. She finds joy in learning about other cultures and languages and often asks patients or friends to teach her a greeting or expression from their home country. That same curiosity, energy, and warmth show up in her practice every day, making her a colleague people enjoy working with and a pharmacist who patients trust.

Marwa is a clinical pharmacist who has never been afraid of hard work or starting over. What motivates her most is simple: the more she learns, the better she can care for her patients and community.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from Jordan in 2011 and began her career at one of the largest hospitals in the United Arab Emirates. Working in a fast-paced tertiary care environment, she built a strong foundation in acute care and medication safety, and learned how powerful it can be when pharmacists work closely with physicians and nurses to support patients and their families.

Marwa immigrated to Canada in early 2012, determined to continue her professional journey in a new health system. After successfully completing the pathway to licensure, she became a Canadian pharmacist educated through bridging and professional development. She joined Shoppers Drug Mart as a staff pharmacist and later became a pharmacy manager.

She eventually earned her Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) designation, allowing her to work closely with people living with diabetes and helping them with insulin starts, dose adjustments, and practical day-to-day questions. She also completed a CAMH mental health certificate, strengthening her skills in supporting patients with mental health conditions and collaborating with prescribers to optimize therapy.

2024 Cohort

Jayden Jones



Born in Miramichi, New Brunswick, Jayden decided in high school to pursue a pharmacy career with a goal of becoming a reliable resource within patient circles of care. Prior to his pharmacy studies, he completed two years of an undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. While studying pharmacy in 2020, Jayden completed a summer internship at the Miramichi Regional Hospital oncology clinic, providing education and support to cancer patients and conducting research in the midst of the COVID pandemic. This experience eventually led him to hospital pharmacy practice after graduating from Dalhousie University in 2022.

Jayden worked in community pharmacy in Miramichi for one year before successfully matching to Horizon's Hospital Pharmacy Residency Program in Moncton. After completing his residency training, he moved into a full-time position at the Moncton Hospital as an outpatient medical oncology pharmacist and currently splits his time between ambulatory oncology and inpatient oncology/hematology. In this role, Jayden is heavily involved in patient education, supportive care/toxicity management of anti-cancer therapies, and chemotherapy protocol development at the site level.

Jayden's decision to pursue a PharmD degree was fueled by a desire to continue expanding his clinical expertise post-residency. He attributes his positive experience in the program thus far to the flexibility of the curriculum which allows him to continue doing work he is passionate about while applying skills from the PharmD program directly to his practice.

As part of his required coursework in first year, Jayden piloted a pharmacist-led immune checkpoint

inhibitor adverse event management service within the Dr. Sheldon H. Rubin Oncology Clinic in Moncton, identifying facilitators and barriers to its long-term use as a clinical pharmacy service. This type of course activity showed how the skills obtained in his PharmD could have an immediate and positive impact on his practice. He also gives special consideration to the people he has met in the program, saying "I'm lucky to have the chance to collaborate with students and instructors who push each other to be better pharmacists and leaders within the profession."

Looking ahead, Jayden hopes to continue building his pharmacy practice in oncology and hematology, and hopes to gain exposure to areas such as stem cell transplant, CAR-T cell therapy, and pediatric oncology.

Outside of pharmacy, Jayden is passionate about volunteering in the community. For the past four years, he has served as a competitive youth hockey coach, most recently winning a Provincial U14 AAA Championship as coach of the New Brunswick East Scorpions. When he isn't at the hospital, studying, or volunteering, Jayden enjoys hockey, golfing, and Crossfit training.



2025 Cohort

Jessica Chambers

Passionate about education and lifelong learning, Jessica's long-term goal was to pursue a PharmD at her alma mater, Memorial University. When the university announced it was accepting its final cohort in 2025, she knew it was 'now or never' if she wanted to turn her long-term goal into reality.

She was drawn to Memorial University's collaborative culture, supportive faculty, and the opportunity to continue learning close to home. With her first year almost behind her, Jessica has especially valued the flexibility of the online courses and the diverse perspectives shared by classmates from a wide range of practice settings across the country.

Jessica's interdisciplinary academic background has given her a unique perspective on science, innovation, and healthcare. She is particularly interested in clinical education, professional development, and the evolving role of pharmacists within the healthcare system. She hopes completing the Doctor of Pharmacy degree will increase her clinical knowledge, support her professional growth, and help her adapt to the expanding role of pharmacists in the healthcare system.

Jessica lives with her husband, Adam, her 15-year-old dog, Oliver, and her two children, Nicholas (age 7) and Landyn (age 5). Life keeps her busy as a full-time pharmacist, part-time PharmD student, and mother of two active kids. Despite these busy life roles, she always strives to make time for the things that matter most to her – spending time with her family and friends. She also loves to travel and explore new destinations, carving out travel time whenever possible.

Jessica grew up in beautiful Cape Breton before moving to Halifax to attend Dalhousie University. After earning a BSc in Chemistry, she completed a MASC in Biomedical Engineering with a focus on drug design. She got married in 2011 and relocated to St. John's with her husband, where her longstanding interest in pharmacy and medicinal chemistry inspired her to pursue a pharmacy degree at Memorial University of Newfoundland. She graduated with the class of 2017.

Jessica began her pharmacy career in community practice with Shoppers Drug Mart in the east-end of St. John's where she spent more than three years building a strong foundation in patient care. This experience taught her how to navigate the profession in a fast-paced retail environment.

After returning from her second maternity leave and moving to St. Philip's (a neighbouring town on the outskirts of St. John's), she relocated to Breakwater Pharmacy to be closer to home. She spent the past five years at this independent pharmacy, developing meaningful relationships with patients and collaborating closely with other local healthcare providers. Living and working in the same community gave Jessica a unique perspective on the impact of community pharmacy and the value of investing your experience into your community.

Happy Happenings



CONGRATULATIONS!

Trisha Joy Bautista, a student in the 2025 cohort, was promoted to a pharmacy manager. It's a meaningful milestone in her career as she takes on expanded responsibilities in patient care, team leadership, and day-to-day operations



ANNOUNCEMENT!

Kristina Hudson, a student in the 2025 cohort, welcomed a baby girl into the world on May 31. Her name is Eleanor Bridget



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Some students came to campus on May 8-10 for their second clinical skills course. They enjoyed the hands-on learning experience and spending time together in-person

HATS OFF TO OUR NEWEST GRADUATES!

Eleven students conferred their degrees at the February (in-absentia) and Spring 2026 convocation ceremonies. Congratulations to:

Michael Butler
Amy Damm
Laura Gunter Pollman
Janet Leung
Lauren Page
Shelby Spurrell

Janice Tan
Abigail Turner
Courtney Veinott
Jennifer Whyte
Thomas Yi

STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL OF PHARMACY COMMITTEES (2025-2026)

Academic Council
Samantha Sweetapple

Professional Suitability
Lindsay Mell

Undergraduate Studies
Allan Choi