



PHARM CIRCLE

Connecting stories from Memorial's PharmD for Working Professionals Program

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Happy Happenings


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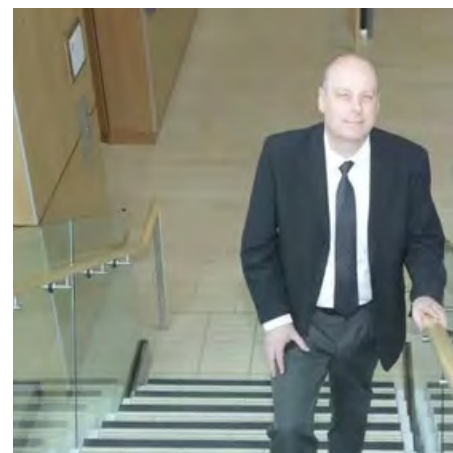


From the Dean's Desk

Dr. Shawn Bugden

This is the eighth issue of the Pharm Circle newsletter.

We will welcome the sixth cohort of students to the program in the fall and look forward to seeing them in person for their first clinical skills course in September. We also said congratulations and farewell to 21 students who graduated from the program this year and are ready to proudly help advance the profession.



In our 8th issue, we feature Dr. Amy Randell who joined the team in 2022. She teaches several courses in the program and brings enthusiasm and passion for teaching to the online classroom. We also reflect on expansion to pharmacist's scope of practice, particularly in Newfoundland and Labrador.

And, as always, we highlight several students who are at various stages of the program and manage to balance the demands of their professional and personal lives in order to help advance the profession. Their dedication to their studies is admirable.

We hope you enjoy the latest issue.

See you again in December.

We have a diverse group of faculty, external content authors, and instructional designers who work together to make this program a success. We will share their profiles in every issue. Keep an eye out to learn more about our growing pharmily!

Instructor Spotlight

Dr. Amy Randell



Dr. Amy Randell is a pharmacist and a teaching assistant professor at Memorial University's School of Pharmacy. Since joining the school in March 2022, she has taught in a variety of courses in both entry-to-practice and working professionals PharmD programs – with most of her teaching focused in the pharmacy practice and applied learning courses. She also holds a seat on the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board as the Zone 1 Pharmacist representative.

Amy earned her BSc (Pharm) from Memorial University in 2010. Following graduation, she started her career at a small, independent pharmacy located in rural Newfoundland. While she absolutely adored the intimate dynamic of practicing community pharmacy in a small-town setting, in 2013 she decided to return to the Memorial University to complete a Master of Science in Pharmacy under the supervision of Dr. Noriko Daneshtalab. It was during her graduate studies that she gained three valuable pieces of personal insight: first, she loved research; second, she enjoyed interacting with her human patients more than her lab rats; and third, she realized she wanted to pursue a career in academia. Based on these newly discovered ideations, she felt the most appropriate next step to help her achieve these goals was to pursue PharmD studies. Following completion of her master's degree, she enrolled in the PharmD for Pharmacists Program at the University of Toronto. Over the course of the next four years, she continued working full time as a community pharmacist while completing her studies part-time. At the end of 2020, as she was finishing her program, she left her rural practice to take a position at Costco Pharmacy in St. John's, where she still works regular shifts.

In early 2021 she was offered a part-time teaching position at Keyin College in their Pharmacy Technician Program. It was while teaching pharmacology and pharmacy calculations that Amy realized that teaching was her passion! "I love the challenge of trying to explain tricky topics in a creative and memorable way that will eventually lead my students to those 'Aha!' moments!" she says, with a proud smile. "Sometimes it involves humor, sometimes it involves relatable analogies, or whatever it takes to help them connect those dots."

Looking to diversify her pharmacy practice experience, Amy took a part-time job with McKesson Specialty Prescription Services in July 2021. "I was looking for an opportunity to broaden my practice experience – try something a little different – but continue teaching as well" she says. It was shortly after she started working there that she was offered the opportunity to get involved with some teaching in the entry-to-practice PharmD Program at Memorial University and later accepted a full-time teaching position at the School of Pharmacy.

As one of the newest members of the working professionals' team, Amy brings enthusiasm and passion to the online classroom. She currently teaches and coordinates several courses in the program, and new students get to meet her during their very first semester of the program.

In her spare time, Amy loves spending time with her family, watching travel documentaries, and checking out new restaurants around town.

The Evolution of the Pharmacist: *Expanding Scope of Practice*

"Pharmacists ability to assess the appropriateness and extend prescriptions for up to a year really helps patients who do not have access to a primary care provider."

Those outside the profession might think a pharmacist's role is mainly in the dispensary filling prescriptions for patients.

But that is not the role they play today. Over the last decade, pharmacist's scope of practice has broadened and they now do so much more for patients. There is greater emphasis on direct-patient care whereby pharmacists work with patients and other health care providers to ensure optimal use of medications; focusing on effectiveness, safety, and patient experience.

Pharmacist's scope of practice includes services like immunizations and injections, medication counselling, common ailment prescribing, and prescription renewal. They also focus on the therapeutic appropriateness of prescriptions and develop care plans for patients.

What are the changes in Newfoundland & Labrador?

The scope of practice may be slightly different in provinces and territories across Canada. In Newfoundland & Labrador (NL), the provincial government released new regulations that allow pharmacists to:

- Extend prescriptions to a maximum of 12 months
- Assess and prescribe for four new ailments [conjunctivitis, fungal nail infections, shingles, uncomplicated urinary tract infections]
- Prescribe hormonal contraceptives and post-exposure prophylaxis

The Government of NL now also permits payment for pharmacist's assessment and prescribing of nine ailments, including four new ailments listed above as well as gastro-esophageal reflux disease, nicotine dependence, herpes simplex (cold sores), fungal skin infections, and hemorrhoids. These services are now available at no cost to all residents of the province.

Furthermore, the expanded scope of practice in this province allows pharmacists to use their skills and knowledge to meet patient's needs in new ways. Dr. Cathy Balsom, a pharmacist with the Medication Therapy Services (MTS) Clinic in the School of Pharmacy, says "the ability to assess and prescribe contraception to patients is a new opportunity for us to provide care and improve access."

She also cites the importance of remuneration from the government for minor ailment assessment and prescribing for cold sores, smoking cessation, and other minor ailments. This now removes the barrier of the patient paying out-of-pocket for these services and improves their access. She says "the pharmacist's ability to assess the appropriateness and extend prescriptions for up to a year really helps patients who do not have access to a primary care physician, which is currently around 26% of the provincial population."

What do these changes mean for the general public?

Canada has an aging population and one where people are living longer. So it is not uncommon to see a rise in chronic health conditions and a greater reliance on services provided by the health care system.

But the current state of health care services across many Canadian provinces – including physician shortages and long wait times – make it challenging for patients to receive timely care. Pharmacists can and do contribute to healthier populations more than ever before. Within their scope, they can give patients alternate ways to receive high quality services that can lead to better health outcomes for them.

In NL, in particular, it means residents have more convenient options for help with common ailments.

Though pharmacists have long been the most accessible healthcare provider, limitations to their scope prevented them from being able to help as much as they could. Now, as pharmacists embrace these new practice advancements, Dr. Balsom believes there will be even more opportunities to help the general public down the road.

What do these changes mean for practicing pharmacists?

There is more demand placed on pharmacists to help meet the needs of an aging and changing population. In addition to being medication experts, they also now focus on some of the clinical aspects of direct patient care. And they may also assume additional roles like educator, mentor, leader, and researcher.

Like other health care professionals, pharmacists must frequently participate in continuing education to learn and develop new skills. They now also work in interdisciplinary environments and are becoming increasingly valued members of the health care team.

Change is inevitable and the role of the pharmacist will continue to evolve with technological advancements, sociopolitical changes, and multidisciplinary shifts. And this, in turn, puts demand on them to have a wider range of knowledge and skills.

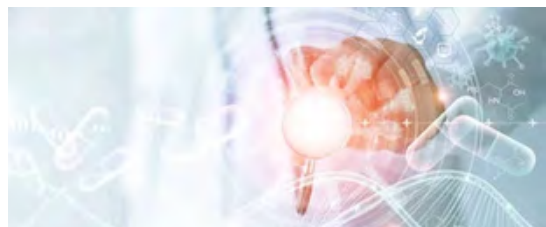
What is the role of the Working Professionals program?

The move to the PharmD credential across Canada helps prepare graduates to meet the new demands of the profession and provide enhanced patient care skills that are now expected of pharmacists.

Dr. Tiffany Lee, Program Director, says "the PharmD for Working Professionals helps fill the gap that may exist for those who completed a bachelor's level degree". She says the program provides additional training in patient-centered care, giving pharmacists more confidence to perform tasks like interpret lab values and perform patient assessments, as well as helping to address complex cases through pharmacotherapeutic consultations.

The graduates of the program find they have more confidence to complete clinical tasks and explore speciality areas. It helped them become a more well-rounded pharmacist and allowed them to re-visit their pharmacy education from a new perspective.

Alishia Anstey, a part-time PharmD student and full-time community pharmacist, says "there is more demand now than ever for us to provide higher level clinical services to our patients. The PharmD for Working Professionals program gave me the skills I need to implement these higher-level services into my daily practice with ease and confidence."



Students in the Spotlight

We like to celebrate our students and let our readers know a little more about the people in our neighbourhood. We share student profiles in every issue.

2019 Cohort Chandler Pafford

Black Duck Cove is a small community on the Great Northern Peninsula in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). With a population of around 100 residents, it's where Chandler Pafford once called home. He moved to St. John's after high school to pursue post-secondary studies and to eventually become a pharmacist.

He graduated with a BSc in Pharmacy in 2019 and was one of the last cohorts of the School of Pharmacy's Bachelor's program. After graduation, Chandler moved back to the Great Northern Peninsula and began working as a staff pharmacist at Consumers PharmacChoice in St. Anthony. As part of his role, he provides care to both the rural residents of Newfoundland and to the local personal care home.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Chandler worked as a relief pharmacist around the province--from Forteau in Labrador all the way to the capital city of St. John's. Throughout his travels, he discovered his interest in managing opioid addiction and in performing injections. In the town of St. Anthony, Chandler is known for having 'the gentlest needle around'. So he is in charge of his pharmacy's flu vaccine clinic each year and was also in charge of COVID vaccinations at several pharmacies throughout the province.

As a former student of Memorial's University, Chandler knew about the School of Pharmacy's comprehensive and intuitive teaching methods. Their lesson plans are based on the most up-to-date guidelines and research. Completeness of information in each course and the applicability of practical, in-person training (in areas such as motivational interviewing and auscultation of lung and heart sounds) was something that always impressed him.

Even though Chandler has only been a pharmacist for about four years, the world of pharmacy has changed dramatically since he graduated. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an increased need for over-the-counter counselling and minor ailment prescribing as people were unable to visit hospitals



due to wait times or to reduce the risk of spreading COVID. Being a student in the working professionals program provided Chandler with the timely knowledge and skills to help weather this storm and provide his patients with the best quality of care possible.

With pharmacists in NL now being able to prescribe for more common ailments, the lessons provided by the PharmD program are more applicable than ever. Chandler's training in diagnosing and treating uncomplicated UTIs in the program allowed him to leap into action as soon as the change was announced and treat his patients with the highest quality care. In the future, Chandler plans to specialize into doing more prescribing for common ailments and hopes the scope of pharmacy in his province continues to expand. And as a former high school chemistry tutor, he would also love the opportunity to teach pharmacy someday.

Chandler is completing the final components of the program this year. After graduation he hopes to celebrate the momentous occasion by travelling somewhere warm. As a child, he went to Florida on a family vacation and a graduation celebration may just be the perfect excuse to revisit.



2020 Cohort *Debbie Chiramel*

Debbie is a citizen of India and completed her pharmacy degree in Kerala, a beautiful coastal area with a year-round

tropical climate. After graduation, she worked there as a hospital pharmacist in a 1000-bed teaching hospital; the same hospital where her mother and sister (both nurses) also worked. While working there, she was also a guest lecturer of pharmacology in the Optometry school.

To pursue further training, Debbie immigrated to Ontario in 2012 to complete a post-graduate diploma program in Pharmaceutical and Food Science Technology and graduated with honors. But her early years in Canada were challenging as she adjusted to life in a new country.

While pursuing permanent residency status, she put her education dreams on hold. She moved to Manitoba and completed her PEBC exams, English language tests, and internships, while working full-time to support herself and her parents back in India. In 2016, she obtained permanent residency and her pharmacist license. She began her career as community pharmacist, but still struggled without a strong support system. A year and half later, she accepted a casual pharmacist position in a rural health centre in Manitoba. This was a game changer for Debbie. She embraced the opportunity to expand her scope of practice. She eventually accepted a permanent position that exposed her to emergency medicine, special care unit, obstetrics, acute medicine, surgery, psychiatry and chemotherapy. She maintained her casual position in community because she loved interacting with patients and helping them with chronic disease management.

Over the next few years, she noticed gaps in her knowledge and began self educating herself. Remembering her dream of continuing her education, she explored her options and discovered Memorial University's working professionals program. She enrolled in 2020, during the

first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant the first onsite course was offered virtually. While it was convenient to complete the course from home, she looked forward to visiting Newfoundland for the second onsite course in year two where she finally had the opportunity to meet faculty and classmates in person. As a bonus, her husband tagged along and they had a memorable time exploring St. John's and becoming honorary Newfoundlanders at a traditional screech-in ceremony.

While Debbie may not have had a strong support system when she first moved to Canada, she certainly found one in her classmates and instructors who encouraged and nurtured her during trying times. She says, "students in this program are treated as peers and respected as working professionals and learning from my classmates and instructors who have different backgrounds and experiences is irreplaceable and invaluable."

Debbie just completed the program. She plans to attend the convocation ceremony in October so that her parents from India can visit and proudly witness her crossing the ceremonial stage.

As a PharmD graduate, Debbie is taking a break from her full-time pharmacist position. She is exploring travel positions, work-from-home positions, and other non-traditional roles that allow her to apply the knowledge and skills gained through her PharmD degree and contribute to society in a meaningful and impactful way. In the interim, she is a busy financial educator and planner. While this may be a different career path for now, it is a passion that aligns with her service mindedness and actually developed from her pharmacy career where she is able to use those soft skills in a slightly different way.

To balance her busy work and study schedule, Debbie loves travelling, hiking, reading, and exploring nature. In the fall of 2022, she got to combine three of those loves at the same time when she hiked a 29-km trail to Kwasitchewan Falls in Manitoba.

2021 Cohort

Emily Edison

Emily grew up in Springdale, a small town in central Newfoundland. She always looked up to her older sister who actually influenced her decision to consider a career in health care. Emily followed in her footsteps when she moved to St. John's to complete her bachelor of science in pharmacy at Memorial University. She graduated in 2020, only 2 years behind her sister (who is still an influential role model in Emily's life and work).

Being a member of the last BSc class at Memorial University, Emily was driven to enroll in the PharmD for Working Professionals program. As a new pharmacist, she wanted to continue to enhance her skills and knowledge, broaden her career opportunities, and provide optimal patient care. She practiced for one year before beginning her PharmD journey.

The program is a great option for Emily because she views it as a stepping stone in her professional advancement and an opportunity to continue working full time in order to gain experience. It has fuelled her passion for patient-centered care. She even gained the confidence to pursue a new work opportunity during her second semester in the program. In February 2022, Emily embarked on a new journey that took her to the west coast of Newfoundland, becoming pharmacist-in-charge of a community pharmacy in the picturesque town of Norris Point.

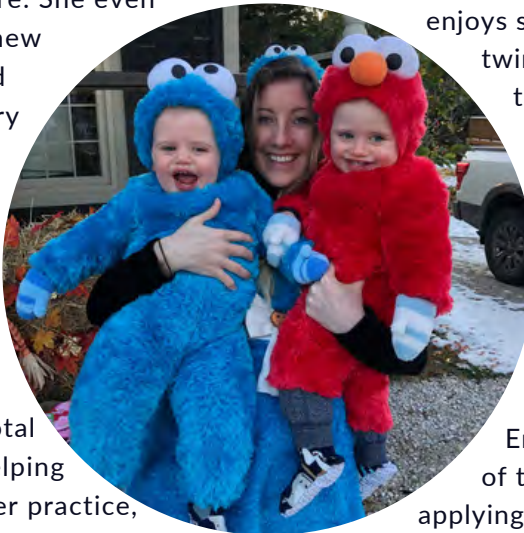
The PharmD program has been pivotal to increasing her confidence and helping her discover new possibilities for her practice, as she learns from her peers and professors. Emily is thankful for the program's flexibility but also thoroughly enjoys being challenged in her course work.

Although the majority of the program is online, Emily says, "the relationships formed and knowledge



learned from peers in the course is truly inspiring". It is a unique experience for her. She gained new friends who help energize her devotion to advancing the pharmacy profession and contribute to her positive experience in the program. Emily believes the friendships she made in both pharmacy programs at Memorial will have a lasting and positive impact on her life and her daily practice.

When she isn't in the workplace or studying, Emily enjoys spending time with her three-year-old twin nephews, Will and Nate. To date, they are certainly her greatest adventure. And, although it may not be the best time to mention it, she loves to wear her Toronto Maple Leaf's jersey and socks to work on occasion, hoping to spark some healthy competitive conversation with patients.



Emily is excited to be nearing the end of the program and looks forward to applying her new skills in practice. She is committed to lifelong learning and plans to seek new educational experiences after graduation as she strives to continually create a collaborative and patient-focused practice.



2021 Cohort

Randa Ataya

students and participates in pharmacy student admission interviews.

Practicing to her full scope in Nova Scotia inspired her to pursue a PharmD through Memorial University. She began the program in September 2021, and, so far, it has been a very rewarding experience for her. She continues to feel empowered to work to her full scope and advance her leadership skills.

These attributes led her to launch a pilot project with the Nova Scotia Health Authority to maximize pharmacists' scope in the emergency department, under which patients visiting the emergency department with primary care needs can now be seen and discharged exclusively by a pharmacist. This initiative led to improved access and flow, positive patient outcomes, and maximization of health care resources.

Currently, Randa continues to work as a clinical pharmacist with the Nova Scotia Health Authority. She remains committed to lifelong learning, preceptorship, and advocacy. Her long-term goal is to continue practicing in a multidisciplinary environment, as she is a proponent of holistic, patient-centered care.

In her down time, Randa loves to experience different cultures through travel and cuisine. She enjoys listening to a variety of music and makes every effort to see live performances, when possible. Her sport of choice is volleyball, and she plays weekly to stay active.

Randa Ataya grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She began her post-secondary journey with a Bachelor of Science from Dalhousie University. This inspired her desire to explore health care and she went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy. Throughout her studies, she was active in a variety of research activities, as well as volunteer and employment opportunities. These experiences led her to present at a variety of conferences, publish evidence on pharmacists' involvement in patient suicidality, and coordinate a student-run community clinic for marginalized individuals. Because of her hard work and passion for pharmacy, Randa received several awards and graduated from her pharmacy degree with distinction.

Moving from academia to employment, her pharmacy practice continues to be just as diverse. Randa worked to her full scope in a variety of community pharmacies, while managing a high-volume store and becoming a public health immunizer before eventually transitioning into hospital pharmacy. She also precepts pharmacy

Important Dates

For future applicants:

This is a limited life program and may have limited admission cycles left

Next application deadline date:
February 1, 2024

For current students:

PHAR 4900 Clinical Skills I
Onsite: September 8-10, 2023

PHAR 6900 Clinical Skills II
Onsite: end of April/early May 2024

2022 Cohort

Rebecca Thiessen

Rebecca grew up in rural southern Manitoba. After high school, she completed a pharmacy technician certificate program. As a technician, she worked with a wonderful pharmacist and mentor who inspired her to pursue her own career as a pharmacist. So in 2003, Rebecca moved to Winnipeg to attend the University of Manitoba and completed her Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy in 2008.

Upon graduation and licensure, Rebecca accepted a pharmacist position at Eden Mental Health Centre. When the manager offered her the position, Rebecca vividly remembers asking, “what if I don’t like working in psychiatry?” This turned out to be an unfounded fear. Almost 15 years later, she is still thriving in that position and still enjoys going to work every day.

In the early stage of her career, Rebecca spent a lot of time expanding her knowledge of psychiatric illnesses and their treatments. Her mantra at the time was, “I don’t have to know all the answers, I just need to know where to find them”. She was keen to further her education in psychiatric pharmacy and completed the Psychiatric Patient Care certificate program (levels 1 and 2) offered in Toronto. And as part of her professional development over the last few years, she regularly attends (either in person or virtually) the Pacific Psychopharmacology Conference in British Columbia.

Rebecca has particular interests in treatment resistant depression, managing the side effects of psychotropic medication, ADHD, and the use of long-acting injectable antipsychotics. In 2019 she became a Board-Certified Psychiatric Pharmacist through the Board of Pharmacy Specialties. She is currently one of only two pharmacists in Manitoba who hold this designation.

In her current role, Rebecca works a variety of tasks including the acute care inpatient unit, a small



outpatient pharmacy, and the outpatient clinic. She always says 'variety is the spice of life' and finds the variety in her work place interesting and satisfying.

Pursuing a PharmD has been a dream of Rebecca’s for many years. With all her children in full-time school in 2022, she felt it was the right time to pursue her dream. She began the PharmD for Working Professionals in September 2022 and finds the program’s flexibility and online learning model a good fit. Now nearing the end of her first year, she says “I love learning, and have enjoyed getting to know my classmates and the instructors so much. I know that I have a lot to learn from the knowledge and experience of my cohort and look forward to the next few years”.

When not studying or working, Rebecca is a chauffeur and cheerleader to her four children. In the winter all her children play in the local recreational hockey league and in the summer they play minor baseball. All her kids take music lessons too and the sounds of the piano, drum, or saxophone can often be heard in the home. This might sound chaotic to some but she wouldn't have it any other way. Modelling lifelong learning and pursuing dreams and education, no matter the age, is very important to Rebecca.



Happy Happenings



OUTSTANDING

Emily Nolan, a recent graduate of the program, received the Shoppers Drugs Mart Pharmacist of the Year at the 2023 Pharmacy Conference in Toronto



CONGRATULATIONS

Karina Arnold, an instructor in the School of Pharmacy, received the PharmD Entry-to-Practice Teaching Excellence Award for 2023



GREAT NEWS

Dr. Shawn Bugden, Dean of the School of Pharmacy, was reappointed for another five-year term

HATS OFF TO OUR NEWEST GRADUATES!

21 students conferred their degrees at the February and Spring 2023 convocation ceremonies

February:

Rasha Ahmed	Vivian Luo	Chelsea Power
Hayley Freeman	Krista Mikail	Heesa Zainulabideen

Spring:

Cheron Blair	Brandi Marshall	Kristen Walsh
Tracy Campbell	Arisha Remtulla	Liam Walsh
Debbie Chiramel	Marion Schloss	Sara Walsh
Natasha Farrell	Nardeep Singh	Jay Warford
Jenna Hache	Jonathan Stevens	Heather Williams

STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL OF PHARMACY COMMITTEES (2022-2024)

Academic Council
Nishi Gupta

Professional Suitability
Holly Noftall

Recruitment
Alishia Anstey

Undergraduate Student Admissions
P. Garrett O'Leary

Undergraduate Studies
Sarah Hyslop