



## From the Executive Director

As fall ushers in, I hope everyone had a great summer and that you survived the brutal heat and created great memories thus providing an abundance of gratitude. Fall is my favorite season of the year with; cooler weather, kids back in school, pumpkin and spice, and the approaching holiday season filling the air.

I hope everyone is staying safe during this busy time of the year. Due to the great advances made with the COVID-19 vaccines even with the COVID-19 variants, we are slowly getting to the other side of this pandemic. If you are missing a loved one or someone close to you due to COVID-19, please know that Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) extends our heartfelt condolences. Our prayers are lifted up for those suffering from COVID-19, for a speedy recovery. As those of us in the medical profession are considered essential, and suit up and show up remaining on the front lines of this pandemic in order to take care of our patient's medical needs. As pharmacists, we continue to play a vital role in the battle against this global pandemic and I am very proud of my chosen profession and our contribution to this fight. We are all in this together.

In this issue Enterhealth, a Dallas-based treatment center for substance use disorder and co-occurring issues has contributed an article for our readers "Holiday Season Information About Addiction and Tips For Families From Enterhealth". The holiday season is upon us and this article provides helpful tips for those suffering from substance use disorder and co-occurring issues and their families to safeguard recovery. I would like to thank Enterhealth for their contribution and hope our readers find these articles beneficial.



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## From the Executive Director continued

In this issue seven (7) student pharmacists, three (3) from the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy (OU) and four (4) from Southwestern Oklahoma College of Pharmacy (SWOSU) were sponsored by OPHP to attend the annual American Pharmacist Association (APhA) Institute of Substance Use Disorder at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT. This group has submitted for our readers their experience at this event often referred to as their “Utah Experience”.

Also in this issue two (2) student pharmacist interns one (1) from OU College of Pharmacy and one (1) from SWOSU College of Pharmacy have submitted for our readers an article describing their experience attending an OPHP Board of Director’s meeting.

The OPHP Board of Directors is pleased to announce our new free-standing OPHP website at [www.ophp.us](http://www.ophp.us) I am excited to have this new resource available to help educate the public regarding the critical services OPHP provides the pharmacy profession and the advantage of self-reporting to OPHP issues of substance use disorder and other mental health issues. Please visit OPHP at [www.ophp.us](http://www.ophp.us) . OPHP mailed to all pharmacies in Oklahoma a magnet for a file cabinet or refrigerator that included the OPHP helpline number and new website address for quick reference if needed. If you didn’t receive a magnet for your pharmacy or need extra contact OPHP and we will send it out right away.

Don’t forget to take time for self-care, and if you are struggling with chemical dependency or other mental health issues, or you know another pharmacist or student pharmacist who you think may be suffering call the (OPHP) Help-Line immediately. There are those who struggle or have a hard time dealing with life on life’s terms on a daily basis. Can I challenge everyone to recognize these struggles either in themselves or others and reach out for help or be willing to help if needed? If you find yourself struggling don’t hesitate to reach out to (OPHP) for help that is readily available if needed. If you know someone struggling during this time, I hope you will be willing to be available for them. If you are a pharmacist or student pharmacist and you are struggling personally with a substance use disorder or other mental health issues, I would encourage you to call OPHP today and self-report your issues now. The advantages of self-reporting your own issues substance use disorder or mental health issues are that you are able to get well or get in recovery, and if there are no legal issues or complaints the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy does not get involved. This is a tremendous opportunity, so don’t let it slip away if you are suffering from substance use disorder or other mental health issues call OPHP before it is too late, resulting in disciplinary action on your intern/pharmacy license or other legal consequences.

I encourage any pharmacist or student pharmacist that may be struggling with substance use disorder or any other mental health issue, or if you know a pharmacist or student pharmacist you think may be struggling, to call the OPHP Help Line now.

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Oklahoma Pharmacists  
Helping Pharmacists

***405-557-5773 (local) 1-800-260-7574 (statewide)***

*All calls are confidential*

*OPHP is readily available for help.*

**If you or a pharmacist you care about is suffering from substance use disorder there is a solution.**

**Contact Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) is readily available for help.**

**HOLIDAY SEASON INFORMATION ABOUT ADDICTION AND TIPS FOR FAMILIES FROM ENTERHEALTH**

By Dr. Harold C. Urschel III, MD, MMA  
Enterhealth Chief Medical Strategist

**Spotting Signs of a Problem in a Loved One and How to be Sensitive to Family Members in Recovery**

With many families gathering together for celebrations, the holidays are a special time of year. At Enterhealth – a premier drug and alcohol addiction treatment company – we understand that this period can also be one of the most stressful times of the year. That holiday stress can drive people to self-medicate, whether it's with alcohol, marijuana, prescription pills or other substances.

The holidays are also a good time of year to really observe and evaluate family members, especially if you have concerns that someone may have a problem with substance abuse. Signs to look out for include: dents in a car, odd changes in behavior, particularly secretive behavior, changes in peer groups, and difficulty sleeping or staying awake. While none of these signs on their own are definite signals that someone may have a problem, it's when they start to stack up that you should be concerned.

If you have a loved one who you know is a recovering alcoholic or addict, your family needs to understand that no alcohol or drugs should be around them at any family gatherings or celebrations. We recommend that patients in recovery wait at least a year before being around alcohol or drug use. You want the family celebrations and bonding to be in substance-safe environments, and people in recovery already get enough temptation from things like commercials, social media, etc. If family members cannot abstain from a substance to support a loved one in recovery, then maybe that person should consider whether or not he or she has a problem themselves.

If you or a loved one is an alcoholic, here are five tips that can help during the holiday season:

**Tip #1 – Spend Time with Sober People**

Alcohol recovery can be tough, especially during the holidays. It's important to be around positive and sober people for support. Observing them will motivate you to emulate their behavior of not drinking.

**Tip #2 – The “I’ll Take a Soda” Approach**

You can have a drink this season – a nice cold soda or some other non-alcoholic beverage. While it's hard to avoid alcohol when you're at a holiday party, you can combat it by substituting another beverage in its place. However, do not use nonalcoholic beer or wine, as they contain traces of alcohol and can set off certain brain areas and reactivate intense brain cravings for alcohol.

**Tip #3 – Manage Your Stress**

Stress is one of various factors that can increase your need to reach out for a bottle of alcohol in order to cope. Remember, you can help manage your drinking problem by managing your stress. Find other ways to deal with stress, such as talking with a friend or family member, exercise, or have a set time in the day where all you do is relax.

**Tip #4 – Indulge Yourself**

It's hard for many to stop drinking, especially during the holiday season. You can benefit from not yielding to the temptation of drinking by rewarding yourself for every time that you don't drink. Reward yourself with a small gift, candy bar or anything else that brings you happiness.

**Tip #5 – Have a “Plan B”**

When battling an addiction, it's important to have a plan just in case you find yourself in an environment where there is alcohol present and you cannot handle the temptation. Having a plan and knowing how you're going to handle the situation will help you significantly. Tell a family member and/or close friend about your recovery process, and call them in case of an emergency to help you in those situations.

Sometimes, it takes more than helpful tips and family support to remain sober during the holidays. Enterhealth, a Dallas-based alcohol and drug addiction recovery center, offers a customized medically-based model of addiction treatment that reverses the effects of substance abuse on the brain.

To learn more about how Enterhealth Ranch and Enterhealth Outpatient Center of Excellence help with addiction, as well as more helpful tips for staying sober this holiday season, please call 800.388.4601 for more information, or visit our website at [enterhealth.com](http://enterhealth.com).



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***All calls are confidential***

***OPHP is readily available for help.***



If you haven't already contributed to OPHP this year, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution. These contributions help OPHP continue to assist and provide scholarships to pharmacists, pharmacy students and pharmacy technicians during the recovery process. Please [click here](#) to make a donation online. For those who have made a contribution this year, please accept our sincere thanks.

## OPHP Helpline

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*If anyone has questions or needs assistance  
with a chemical dependency problem  
either for a friend or themselves please call  
Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP)  
405-557-5773 (local) 1-800-260-7574 (statewide)  
There is a solution. All calls are confidential*

## SEVEN STUDENT UTAH EXPERIENCES

1. This summer I was fortunate enough to attend APhA's Substance Use Disorder institute hosted by the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. I truthfully don't think I can adequately put into words how amazing the SUD Institute was. To be in a room with so many like-minded individuals, who were all there to expand their knowledge on substance use disorders, to better support the patients that tend to be the ones that get pushed aside and looked down upon, was inspiring. The love and compassion in the room was palpable, it easily became an area where you could open yourself up and be vulnerable without any fear of judgement. I do believe that anyone who has dedicated their lives to helping others in a health care field needs to experience the institute for themselves. Who knows, by the end of it, you may feel empowered enough to climb a mountain (yes, an actual mountain!) or help a patient that others have already cast aside. Plus, they even bring in the cutest therapy dogs!

If you are thinking about going, go! If you are uncomfortable about the topic and unsure how to help your patients in their darkest hours, go! You could be the person that saves their life. I was able to attend the institute on a scholarship awarded to me by OPHP, and I am forever grateful to Dr. Kevin Rich for this opportunity!

2. I first learned of the APhA Institute on Substance Use Disorders when Dr. Rich came to speak to our P1 class during fall semester. I knew immediately that I wanted to attend someday and was fortunate enough to attend the institute this spring. I was able to learn about many different aspects of substance use disorders, including some of the science behind addiction, the role of mental health, and how important a good support system is when it comes to recovery. It was also inspiring to see ways that other pharmacy schools from around the country have impacted their communities through Naloxone education and I hope to be able to implement something similar for our community in the future.

I attended 12-step meetings for the first time, including Narcotics Anonymous and Al-Anon. I learned of other programs such as Co-Dependents Anonymous that I wasn't aware existed. A lot of my time was just spent learning, observing, and reflecting, but it was extremely inspiring to see so many other people sharing their stories. Hopefully someday in the future I will be able to let go of some of my inhibitions and share some of my own story.

I met so many extremely kind people from around the country and got to know my peers from Oklahoma a lot better as well. We got to stay in the dorms for 5 days, which was another new life experience for me. Having a late-night pizza party in my dorm room with a group of friends was something I never expected to happen in my life, but it was one of the highlights of the trip for me. I had never been to Utah before, and it is more gorgeous than I ever could have imagined. Seeing the snowcapped mountains every time we walked outside was breathtaking.

I can't say enough good things about my Utah Experience. It was such an incredible opportunity and I encourage anyone to attend that is interested in learning more about substance use disorder.

I would like to start my reflection by thanking OPHP and Dr. Rich for allowing me the opportunity to travel to Salt Lake City and attend the Institute. I am truly thankful for every one of you for this experience.

3. I attended the Institute knowing that it would be informative and that I would leave with more knowledge about substance use disorders. I did not know that I would not just learn about the disease, but also about people who had suffered from the disease as well. I attended all the recovery meetings and listened to so many stories, from people that were in recovery, to people who had seen a loved one battling the disease, to people who had lost a loved one battling this disease. It was raw and vulnerable – but beautiful in a sense because I had never experienced a space where people could be so open. It was a transformative experience for me because from being in those meetings and listening to other's share their stories, my experiences with my father, his addiction and recovery were validated. I was not able to share my story this time, because I realized that although I never hated my father for his addiction – I also never forgave him either and I could not share without first forgiving him. After leaving the last meeting, I called my father, and I told him about the Institute and why I decided to come. After 3 years, I let him read my essay that I submitted to OPHP. I shared with him the shame that I felt as a child, into adulthood, along with the years of pain I had carried. I told him that during the meeting, I had realized I was still holding on to so much pain and that I needed to forgive him, so I did. After 20 plus years, I forgave my father and that would not have happened without this Institute.
4. My Utah experience was a real eye opener. I thought I had a solid understanding of how substance use disorder worked, but this experience challenged what I thought I knew. After taking a step back to look at it from every angle imaginable, (from the biochemical to the psychosocial, and everywhere in-between), I was able to see where my views on SUD differed from reality. Thanks to my Utah experience, I feel significantly more confident in being able to identify and help with individuals struggling with this potentially crippling disease.
5. The APhA Institute on Substance Use Disorders offered me an incredible opportunity to learn about substance use disorders in a much more unique way than any classroom could ever offer. Many interesting topics were covered including the neuroscience of substance use disorders, understanding medications used to treat opioid use disorders, integrating pharmacists to help manage pain in the setting of active recovery, and benefits of naloxone. We also heard some amazing testimonies of pharmacists in recovery and held conversations on how shame and stigma impact an individual's recovery. Over the course of the five-day conference, I gained a better understanding of how substance use disorders can impact individuals and their families and discovered ways in which I can provide help to those struggling in my career as a pharmacist. I am so thankful for this opportunity to attend this conference and look forward to bringing this knowledge back with me to my community.



7. I was fortunate enough to fill the position of PLS Substance Use Disorder Chair and have the opportunity to go to Utah to the APhA Substance Use Disorder (SUD) institute this past June. Not only was Utah such a beautiful place with so many great things to explore, but the institute was also so eye opening. I learned so much more in depth than I could have imagined about addiction, methadone, Narcan, etc. The opportunity to sit in on alcoholic anonymous, narcotics anonymous, and even al-anon meetings for friends or families of those who suffer from addiction. I had no idea so many pharmacists or pharmacy students suffer from these diseases. I always knew OPHP was important, but I value it so much more now, these pharmacists that have suffered previously have become so strong from their constant recovery and have so much to share about their experiences. I wish every pharmacy student could get the opportunity that I did. The best part about this institute is how close everyone is, they've all been going for years and called each other family because that is exactly how it felt and they were so welcoming. I hope in my years as a pharmacist to return to continue to better educate myself, but I am so thankful to OPHP for giving me that opportunity.

### **OPHP BOARD MEETING STUDENT EXPERIENCES**

1. I had the pleasure of attending the Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) June board meeting and I love what this organization stands for. Prior to sitting in on the board meeting I had a little background information from Dr. Kevin Rich visiting the OU College of Pharmacy and speaking about the program but seeing the organization in action solidified my interest. I admire that our state has a program to help those within the profession instead of strictly taking a license to practice medicine at any chance. Of course, the goal of OPHP is to help pharmacists, however through helping our pharmacists the outreach of the organization is huge and can help countless communities.

This is an organization that I would love to be involved in and will pursue opportunities at any chance possible. I think it would be beneficial for all students within a pharmacy program to attend a meeting and learn more about this amazing organization.

2. Thank you again for allowing the opportunity for interns such as myself to sit in on an OPHP Board Meeting. This experience opened my eyes to the process the participants must go through. I learned that these pharmacy workers with chemical dependency have been in the program for up to and more than 10 years, and it is evident that the board members care about their success. The participants reciprocated their gratefulness for the program, and I believe this is a fortunate way to guide people to take care of themselves which in turn will allow them to take care of others.

## ***Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP)***

***405-557-5773 locally—1-800-260-7574 statewide  
There is a solution.***

**WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU SUSPECT A COLLEAGUE  
HAS A PROBLEM WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER**

**Trust your instincts!!**

**Call Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) immediately  
at the OPHP Help Line 1-800-260-7574 statewide or  
405-557-5773 locally**

**Do not confront alone  
Left alone the problem will not go away.**

**If you or a pharmacist you care about is suffering from s  
substance use disorder there is a solution.**

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*is readily available to help.***

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**ALL CALLS ARE CONFIDENTIAL**

## *Identifying the Problem*

Substance Use Disorder is a cunning, baffling, miserable disease. Denial is a major factor involved stopping those with this disease from seeking help for themselves. So often concerned family members, friends and colleagues, express knowledge that a problem exists, but are unable to identify it. The following *Impaired Pharmacist Symptom Inventory* may help to identify the problem, and get them the help that is so readily available before it is too late.

### *Impaired Pharmacist Symptom Inventory*

- Overwork\*\*
- Disorganized schedule
- Spasmodic work pace\*\*
- Unreasonable behavior
- Inaccessible to patients and employer
- Prescription errors\*\*
- Patient complaints
- Frequent absences
- Decreasing workload and tolerance
- Frequent days off for vague reasons
- Taking sexual advantage of coworkers or customers
- Filling illegal prescriptions
- Taking and/or using drugs from pharmacy without follow-up by physician\*\*
- Taking/selling drugs to others or giving them to family or friends
- Often late, absent or ill
- Decreasing work performance
- “Pharmacy Gossip”
- Incommunicative/unavailable
- Alcohol on breath while in pharmacy

\*\*early signs

*What do you do if you suspect a colleague has a problem with substance use disorder?*

**Trust your instincts!!**

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