Facts about the Organization and the Profession

CPNP is a professional association representing psychiatric and neurologic pharmacists. CPNP’s 2,500 person membership is comprised of specialty pharmacists, many being Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacists (BCPP), who specialize in psychiatry, addiction, psychopharmacology, and neurology. CPNP’s mission is to advance the reach and practice of psychiatric pharmacy and serve as the voice of the specialty while its vision is a world where all individuals living with mental illness, including those with substance use and neurologic disorders, receive safe, appropriate, and effective treatment.

Role of Psychiatric Pharmacists

Psychiatric pharmacists are the experts in the safe, effective and well-informed use of medications in the treatment of psychiatric disorders. This includes:

- Working collaboratively and consulting with other members of the interprofessional team to optimize drug therapy.
- Providing direct patient care, including treatment assessment and medication management activities.
- Monitoring for potential adverse drug reactions and interactions.
- Educating patients and families on psychiatric and addiction medications as well as psychiatric and substance use disorders and other related conditions.
- Engaging in patient advocacy efforts both independently and with consumer groups.
- Teaching pharmacy students and trainees as well as other health care practitioners.
- Conducting original research and publishing in peer-reviewed journals and texts.
- Developing medication and formulary policies for state Medicaid programs.
- Working to reduce medication costs and demonstrating cost savings to health care systems.

Education and Certification of Psychiatric Pharmacists

To become a BCPP, an individual must:

- Achieve a Doctor of Pharmacy degree (Pharm.D.) from an accredited pharmacy program.
- Hold a current, active license to practice pharmacy in the United States or another jurisdiction.
- Complete an accredited residency in psychiatric pharmacy and/or meet the minimum requirements for experience in practice.
- Achieve a passing score on the psychiatric specialty certification examination managed under the Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS).

More information on board certification at http://www.bpsweb.org/bps-specialties/psychiatric-pharmacy/
Common Practice Settings for Psychiatric Pharmacists

Psychiatric pharmacists are employed by:

- Government supported hospitals (Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense).
- Community, private and university health systems.
- Colleges of pharmacy and medicine.
- Federal and state prison systems.
- Federal, state, and local psychiatric, substance abuse, and long-term care facilities.
- Pharmaceutical manufacturers.
- State and federal agencies.
- Managed care organizations and pharmacy benefit managers.

Value Delivered by Psychiatric Pharmacists

Psychiatric pharmacists help to optimize the care of patients with psychiatric and substance use disorders. Specifically, psychiatric pharmacists:

- Work as part of teams to improve the quality of care and outcomes for patients with psychiatric and substance use disorders. Under collaborative practice agreements with physicians, pharmacists often serve as the primary clinician on the health care team.
- Improve access to health care for the nation’s most disadvantaged and vulnerable patient populations, including veterans and those who reside in rural and other underserved areas.
- Provide ongoing monitoring for both therapeutic and adverse outcomes.
- Improve medication adherence in accordance with prescribed treatment plan.
- Provide pharmacologic and therapeutic information to other members of the interprofessional team.
- Improve patient empowerment in the recovery process.
- Decrease overall drug expenditures and produce cost savings to the health care system.

Potential of Psychiatric Pharmacists

Psychiatric pharmacists are an underutilized resource that can help address the growing demand for mental health services. The mental health care system can better meet demand by utilizing psychiatric pharmacists as:

- Members of the treatment team in managing medications for patients with psychiatric and substance use disorders.
- The authoritative experts on the optimal use of medications and patient care.
- Indispensable resources for patients, physicians, and non-physician health care professionals in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

Psychiatric pharmacists are integral members of interprofessional teams who address the pharmaceutical care of patients with psychiatric and substance use disorders.