PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Pharmacy Prepares for Legislative Session
Public Policy Priorities Address Business Issues, Advance Professional Practice

The Texas Pharmacy Association is working with other pharmacy groups to advance a series of legislative priorities during the 86th Legislative Session, which began in January and runs through May. TPA has identified a number of business issues affecting pharmacists and their practice, as well as professional issues that are designed to advance the practice of pharmacy in the state.

A brief summary of those issues is found on page 4.

Pharmacy Day at the Capitol

More than 600 pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy students are expected to gather in Austin on February 26 for Pharmacy Day at the Capitol. The day will begin with a breakfast briefing to review key pharmacy legislative priorities and to hear from state legislators. Participants will also receive talking points and have an opportunity to hone their messages before going to the capitol to attend meetings with legislators and staff to educate them on the issues and how they affect pharmacy and patient outcomes.

Texas pharmacy schools are also hosting a health fair at the Capitol from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for legislators and their staffs. Students and faculty will offer:

- Blood pressure testing
- Blood sugar testing
- Strep and flu testing and demonstrations
- Body mass index (BMI) measurement
- Over-the-counter cough & cold medication counseling

TPA Advocacy Toolkit

Are you eager to advocate for your profession, but not sure where to begin or what to expect? The Texas Pharmacy Association recently unveiled its 2019 Advocacy Toolkit, designed to equip Texas pharmacy professionals to fight for their future. This TPA member benefit includes:

- A fact sheet with pharmacy facts and the importance of the pharmacy profession in Texas (suitable for distributing to legislators),
- Advocacy tips to help you communicate effectively with lawmakers and their staff, conduct productive meetings with legislators, and understand how to handle different meeting scenarios, and
- Issue briefs outlining the importance of our 2019 legislative priorities (also suitable for leaving behind after a meeting with lawmakers or their staff).

It’s a must-read for anyone planning to meet with elected officials or their staffs either at the Capitol or in their local district offices. TPA members may download the toolkit from the Advocacy tab at texaspharmacy.org.

TPA Advocacy Webinars

Getting involved in politics can seem scary, but it doesn’t have to be! Knowing a bit about the legislative process and how to engage with elected officials makes it easier to advocate for your profession.

In early February, TPA’s division director of public affairs published a video taking members step-by-step through the basics of the Texas legislature, as well as how to communicate effectively with legislators and their staff members.

A second video, recently released, takes users through five different scenarios, each highlighting a different pharmacy issue and demonstrating how advocates can approach different engagement scenarios with legislative staff—those who are agreeable, disagreeable, noncommittal, persuadable, or disinterested.

TPA members may log in and view videos by selecting the Advocacy tab at texaspharmacy.org.
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Legislative and Regulatory Update

Pharmacy Groups Hold Legislative Staff Briefing

Texas pharmacy came together February 6 for a Pharmacy 101 briefing for legislative staff members. All eight Texas Pharmacy Summit organizations educated staffers about the business of pharmacy, pharmacists’ education and training, community pharmacists and pharmacies, and health-system pharmacists and pharmacies. Texas Pharmacy Association Board Member Lauren Clark spoke about the variety of services that pharmacists can provide, as well as pharmacists’ value with regard to improving patient health outcomes and lowering costs. Pharmacy organization lobbyists, including TPA’s own Stephanie Chiarello, laid out pharmacy’s legislative agenda.

Pharmacy Represents at State of Reform Conference

Pharmacy was included in the dialogue this month at what has been called Texas’s “most important health policy conference of the year.” The Texas Pharmacy Association provided critical insights on pharmacists being included in value-based purchasing arrangements. CEO Debbie Garza spoke as part of a panel discussion on the Texas approach to value-based care, highlighting areas where pharmacists can improve patient outcomes and reduce health care costs. TPA and AIP Member Bruce McAnally was a panelist in a session addressing PBM reform and pharmacy costs in the 2019 legislative session. He was joined by Rep. Tom Oliverson (R-Houston), who will introduce pharmacy’s PBM reform legislation.

TPA Meets with HHS Officials

Texas Pharmacy Association staff met in December with Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) officials to discuss the Rider 60 Report, which required HHSC to evaluate potential cost savings in the administration of the prescription drug benefits (i.e., whether PBMs are the best deal for taxpayers or if there is a less expensive but more effective and efficient way to administer the pharmacy program). A coalition of pharmacy groups agrees that Rider 60 has the potential for bringing much-needed transparency, cost effectiveness, and better certainty and control for the roughly $8 billion biennial Medicaid prescription drug benefit.

TPA’s Debbie Garza and Stephanie Chiarello met with Dr. Courtney Phillips, the new executive commissioner for the Texas HHSC. Phillips is taking time to meet with different health care stakeholders to hear from them firsthand. Pharmacy shared concerns regarding reimbursement in Medicaid and the need for it to be fair and transparent. She also heard about pharmacists’ ability to help Medicaid beneficiaries with medication adherence and other pharmacy services focusing on keeping them out of higher-cost care.

TPA Welcomes New Public Affairs Staff

In November, the Texas Pharmacy Association announced two new members of its public affairs team in preparation for the 2019 Texas legislative session.

Stephanie Chiarello joined the Association as division director, public affairs. Chiarello brings extensive Texas legislative experience to the Association, having worked for 11 years during six biennial legislative sessions at the state capitol—three in the House and three in the Senate. She most recently served as senior policy analyst and district office director for Senator Kirk Watson (D-Austin), where she advised the senator on several issues including health care and managed constituent communications.

In addition, TPA welcomed Karen Reagan back into the fold at TPA as its contract lobbyist for the upcoming session. Karen is a principal at the Texas Star Alliance, a top-ranked lobby firm in Austin. She has played a pivotal role in shaping public policy for numerous Fortune 500 companies, Texas-based businesses, and influential trade associations. Her roots run deep in pharmacy, where she has served as Vice President of TPA and as Executive Director of the Texas Federation of Drug Stores. Karen has worked as a contract lobbyist for Walgreens, the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, and Cardinal Health.
STUDENTS

TPA Visits Texas Pharmacy Schools

UIW Feik School of Pharmacy

Texas Pharmacy Association CEO Debbie Garza was privileged to participate February 9 in the Phi Lambda Sigma induction ceremony at the University of the Incarnate Word’s Feik School of Pharmacy. Garza discussed professional leadership and shared what she believes to be seven habits of highly effective pharmacy leaders.

On November 27, Garza was invited to speak to first-year pharmacy students and to share her career path during TPA Member and Associate Dean Dr. Russell Attridge’s Introduction to Pharmacy class. Garza discussed the role leadership and advocacy has played in her career and how her position at TPA allows her to continue her passion of advocating for this profession. Garza was also able to attend the APhA-ASP student chapter meeting.

UT-Austin College of Pharmacy

CEO Debbie Garza spoke January 29 to the University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy’s APhA-ASP student chapter about Pharmacy Day at the Capitol and the importance of advocacy, particularly in light of the current legislative session. She discussed pharmacy’s legislative priorities and tips for effective meetings with legislators and staff.

UT-Tyler Fisch College of Pharmacy

On November 28, Texas Pharmacy Association CEO Debbie Garza, R.Ph., traveled to Tyler to meet with pharmacy students at UT Tyler’s Fisch College of Pharmacy. TPA Member and Professor Dr. Lizzie Cook invited Garza to be a guest lecturer on the importance of professional involvement and advocacy for the first-year pharmacy students. Garza shared her pharmacy journey and how it’s been powered by purpose. She discussed why students should be engaged in advocating for their profession not only with elected officials, but also within their community and with other health professionals.

University of Houston

Eden Males, director of TPA’s Professional Recovery Network (PRN), spoke to students at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy on February 8. Males discussed the signs and symptoms of addiction and mental health issues, the accountability and support PRN offers to those struggling, and the advocacy PRN can provide to their licensing board and other regulatory agencies. She also discussed healthy self-care strategies to ensure pharmacy students have the appropriate tools in place to navigate stressors they may experience professionally and personally.

TEXAS PHARMACY FOUNDATION

Donation Expands TPA Pharmacy Museum

Pharmacies weren't always the domain of electronic prescriptions and PBM contracts. A century ago, local pharmacies dispensed not only medications but also fun and delicious treats!

Recognizing this legacy, the pharmacy museum at the Texas Pharmacy Association office added an antique soda fountain back bar to its collection February 1. This well-preserved piece of pharmacy history was made possible by a generous donation to the Texas Pharmacy Foundation by Ben Fry, a loyal TPA member since 1972. The mirrored, wooden and glass cabinet will soon display additional pharmacy memorabilia currently in storage.

Whether you remember (or even worked in) a turn-of-the-century pharmacy, or whether you’re focused on our mantra that “together pharmacy advances,” take this opportunity to recall pharmacy’s roots and stop by to look at some history if you’re ever near the TPA headquarters in Austin.

UPCOMING DATES

February 26, 2019
Pharmacy Day at the Capitol
Austin, Texas

August 2–4, 2019
2019 TPA Conference & Expo
Irving, TX

For a complete list of upcoming events, please view the online calendar at www.texaspharmacy.org.
PHARMACY’S PRIORITIES FOR THE 86TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE

BUSINESS ISSUES

RX Texas Needs:

1. PBM Reform:
   Oversight of PBMs by Texas Department of Insurance for greater pricing transparency and protections for patients and pharmacists.

2. Medicaid Reform:
   Increase transparency, accountability, and uniformity with a single pharmacy benefit administrator to save Texas tax dollars.

3. Payment for Services/Payment Parity:
   Payment for pharmacist-provided services if services are within pharmacist’s scope of practice and other providers are paid for providing same services.

4. E-Prescribing of Controlled Substances:
   Mandate electronic prescribing of all controlled substances to improve patient care and increase safety and security in the prescribing process.

5. PMP Requirement (SB 420/HB 577):
   Clarify that pharmacists are not required to check the PMP for refills.

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

RX Texas Needs:

1. Enhanced Pharmacy Services—‘Test and Treat’ (SB 835/HB 1827):
   Increase access to care by pharmacists furnishing medications for positive CLIA-waived test, like for flu and strep, under physician protocol.

2. Enhanced Pharmacy Services—Furnish Non-Diagnostic Medications (SB 835):
   Increase access to care by pharmacists furnishing select medications for common conditions under physician protocol.

3. Vaccination Expansion:
   Expand access to immunizations by allowing pharmacists to administer CDC-recommended vaccines without a prescription to anyone 7 years and older.

4. Collaborative Practice:
   Clarify that a physician may delegate duties to any qualified and trained pharmacist in any practice setting to improve patient outcomes.