

# S O U T H D A K O T A P H A R M A C I S T



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- **Advocacy in Action: Legislative Days 2026**
- **Members Making a Difference**
- **PTU 2026: Smarter Training, Better Outcomes**

SPRING EDITION 2026

# AMPLIFY

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Our mission is to promote, serve and protect the pharmacy profession.

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**APRIL**

- 8 **Aberdeen District Spring Meeting**  
The Flame | Aberdeen, SD | 6:30 pm
- 10 **Board of Pharmacy Meeting**  
Sioux Falls, SD | 9 am
- 21 **Interim Rules Review Committee**  
Room 414, State Capitol | Pierre, SD | 10 am
- 25 **National Prescription Drug Take Back Day**
- 28 **Watertown District Spring Meeting**  
Party Room at Hy-Vee | Watertown, SD | 6 pm

**MAY**

- 5 **Interim Rules Review Committee**  
Room 414, State Capitol | Pierre, SD | 10 am
- 13 **Sioux Falls District Spring Meeting**  
Crave (Inside the Catlin / Hilton Garden Inn Downtown)  
Sioux Falls, SD | 6 pm
- 25 **Memorial Day**
- 27 **Black Hills District Spring Meeting**  
Minerva's | Rapid City, SD | 6 pm
- 29 **Award Nominations due to SDPhA Office**

**JUNE**

- 6 **Interim Rules Review Committee**  
Room 414, State Capitol | Pierre, SD | 10 am
- 14 **Flag Day**
- 19 **Juneteenth**
- 21 **Father's Day**

**TBA**

- Mobridge District Spring Meeting**
- Mitchell District Spring Meeting**
- Huron District Spring Meeting**
- Yankton District Spring Meeting**

**SAVE THE DATE**

Please save the date for the 140th SDPhA Annual Meeting Sept. 10-12 in Brookings, SD! Watch your email for more information!



# Spring EDITION

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## HELPFUL INFORMATION

- 24–29 **PAAS National – Pharmacy Audit Assistance Service**

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# President's PERSPECTIVE

Chelsea L. Conway, PharmD, BCCP // SDPhA Board President



To all of you who chose to join SDPhA this year—thank you!

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to connect with pharmacists across the state. One thing has been consistent: pharmacists in every setting care deeply about their patients, their teams, and the future of this profession.

Thank you for being part of that.

The transition to a voluntary membership model has changed the way we connect, but it has also made those connections more meaningful. When I speak to colleagues about SDPhA, I am increasingly aware that the people in the room (and the people reading this) are here because they chose to be. That matters.

The more we talk about SDPhA with our colleagues, the more awareness grows. Many pharmacists are still adjusting to the idea that membership is no longer automatic. A simple conversation, like sharing why you chose to join, or inviting someone to a District Meeting, can make a meaningful difference. That is how we build momentum, one relationship at a time.

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the 50th Annual South Dakota Society of Health-System Pharmacists meeting. As a health-system pharmacist myself, it was wonderful to gather with colleagues who are working through many of the same challenges I see every day. It was also a good reminder that no matter our practice setting, we are all in this together.

While I heard very real challenges – workforce, and in particular, finding and retaining pharmacy technicians – this is not isolated to one setting. It is something community pharmacies and health systems are all navigating, and it will require shared solutions. Even so, I left energized, and more convinced than ever of the importance

of SDPhA's role in bringing together and representing all practice areas as we work toward common goals.

Speaking of energized—if you haven't lately, I highly encourage you to sit down and chat with a pharmacy student. Their eagerness to help brings a level of energy that benefits all of these conversations. And if you haven't seen it yet, SDSU's 10-year average first-time NAPLEX pass rate is ranked #1 in the nation. THE NATION! That's something we can all be proud of.

Promoting, protecting, and advocating on behalf of our profession does not happen in a vacuum. As we've transitioned to this new membership structure, there has been a tremendous amount of work happening behind the scenes—much of it unseen. The administrative lift has been significant, and at times more complex than expected. Add in the day-to-day operations, new membership efforts, and ongoing advocacy work, and it has required a great deal of focus and commitment.

That's why this moment matters. It's an opportunity for all of us to step up for our profession and for each other.

Right now, SDPhA membership is prorated for the remainder of the fiscal year, bringing the cost to under \$100. If you know someone who has been on the fence, this is a great time to encourage them to join. The shift away from automatic membership has taken some adjustment, but our ability to continue advocating for the profession now depends on the strength of our engaged, paying membership.

Finally, advocacy also depends on something more. Progress is shaped not only by good ideas, but by timing, relationships, and the individuals serving in the Capitol. With primary elections approaching in June, this is an important reminder that staying informed, and participating, matters. Watch The Script for more information on the upcoming primary election and why your voice is important.

We are here. We are working. And we can only do this because you are with us.

# Director's COMMENTS

Amanda Bacon // SDPhA Executive Director



## Advocacy in Action

The 2026 legislative session has officially concluded, bringing with it a season that was, by many accounts, one of the most complex and challenging in recent memory. For those who were not present at the Capitol throughout the session, it can be difficult to fully convey the pace, tone, and intensity that

defined the environment this year. Healthcare broadly, second only to public education, was a frequent focus of legislative activity, and many proposals carried significant implications for providers and patient care across the state.

In this context, the work of the South Dakota Pharmacists Association (SDPhA) was both constant and deliberate. SDPhA reviewed every bill introduced during the session, 570 in total, in addition to resolutions and commemorations. Each was evaluated for its potential impact on pharmacy practice, healthcare delivery, and patient access to care.

Of those, more than 50 measures warranted close monitoring or active engagement.

While legislative outcomes are often measured by the bills that pass or fail, that perspective tells only part of the story. Some of the most meaningful work in advocacy happens well before a bill is heard in committee. It happens in conversations, in relationship-building, and in ensuring that the perspective of pharmacy is understood long before formal debate begins. In many cases, the most important outcomes are the issues that never advance. Proposals are reshaped, delayed, or ultimately set aside.

This session required a disciplined and strategic approach. Entering the year, it was clear that the environment would not support the advancement of new pharmacy practice initiatives. Instead, the focus was on protecting the role of pharmacists and preserving patient access to care.

I was consistently reminded of something former SDPhA Executive Director Sue Schaefer told me during my first legislative session: there are years when not losing ground is a win.

This was one of those years. Success was defined not by expansion, but by stability. By ensuring that the profession did not lose ground in a difficult landscape.

## Advocacy Beyond the Capitol

SDPhA's advocacy efforts extend beyond the legislative session itself. Advocacy is a year-round commitment, grounded in relationships and sustained through consistent engagement with policymakers at both the state and federal levels.

At the federal level, pharmacy continues to navigate significant policy developments. Pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) reform remains a central priority, particularly as new provisions related to reasonable and relevant contract terms in Medicare Part D move toward implementation. These changes represent meaningful progress, but their ultimate impact will depend on how they are executed and enforced.

South Dakota has been well represented in these efforts. Continued engagement with our congressional delegation, particularly the office of Sen. John Thune, has ensured that the perspective of pharmacists is included in national policy discussions. These relationships are critical as federal decisions increasingly shape the practice environment at the local level.

At the same time, emerging challenges, including ongoing developments in the 340B space and broader Medicare and Medicaid policy changes, underscore the need for continued vigilance and engagement.

## A New Era for Membership

This legislative session also took place during a period of significant transition for SDPhA.

Following the repeal of the statutory membership structure in July 2025, the association has fully transitioned to a voluntary membership model. Pharmacists are no longer members by "default" through licensure. Instead, membership now reflects an intentional decision to support the profession and the work carried out on its behalf.

This change has created a more direct connection between membership and advocacy. SDPhA's priorities, positions, and initiatives are now shaped by those who choose to engage. The pharmacists who step forward as members are the ones helping to determine the direction of the association and the future of the profession in South Dakota.

Early indicators have been encouraging. Engagement through initiatives such as the Founding Member campaign and participation in association activities suggests a strong foundation for this next chapter.

At the same time, we need to be candid. We are currently at approximately 50% of our membership goal for this first fiscal year. Reaching the level of engagement needed to sustain strong advocacy will require more pharmacists to step forward.

SDPhA's ability to represent the profession is not automatic. It is built by those who choose to participate. Staying informed and connected to the policy issues affecting pharmacy increasingly depends on that decision.

## Engagement at Every Level

Opportunities for engagement extend well beyond the legislative session.

SDPhA's Spring District Meetings are currently underway across the state, providing pharmacists with an opportunity to connect locally, share perspectives, and help shape the association's priorities moving forward. These meetings are particularly important this year as the profession adjusts to the new membership structure and looks ahead to future initiatives.

Participants are encouraged to attend, bring colleagues, and take part in discussions that will help guide the next phase of SDPhA's work.

Planning is also underway for the SDPhA Annual Convention, which will be held September 10–12 in Brookings. This year's meeting marks the 140th anniversary of the association and will include continuing education, networking opportunities, and important conversations about the future of pharmacy in South Dakota.

## The Value of Professional Advocacy

Pharmacists practice in a wide range of settings, each with its own priorities and challenges. All play important roles in advocating for their respective interests.

SDPhA's role is to ensure that the professional voice of pharmacy is represented in policy discussions at every level. This includes not only legislative advocacy, but also engagement with regulatory bodies, collaboration with partner organizations, and participation in national conversations that shape the future of the profession.

Strong partnerships, such as the ongoing collaboration with the partners represented throughout the Journal, help ensure that pharmacists across all practice settings are represented. Together, these efforts strengthen the profession as a whole.

## Looking Ahead

If there is one lesson reinforced by this legislative session, it is that advocacy cannot be passive. The policies that shape pharmacy practice, the business of pharmacy, and the ability of pharmacists to care for their patients, are influenced by those who are engaged, informed, and willing to participate in the process.

That engagement begins with membership. It continues through participation in association activities, communication with policymakers, and involvement in the broader professional community.

The work ahead will require continued collaboration, thoughtful leadership, and a shared commitment to advancing the profession. SDPhA remains focused on ensuring that pharmacists in South Dakota have a strong voice in shaping that future.



## Advocacy in Action LEGISLATIVE DAYS 2026

Each year, SDPhA Legislative Days brings pharmacists and student pharmacists together at the State Capitol for one of the most important experiences in professional advocacy. The 2026 event once again highlighted the impact of showing up, engaging in the process, and ensuring the voice of pharmacy is part of the conversation.

This year's event began on a Tuesday evening, with expanded programming designed to strengthen connections between legislators and the pharmacy community. The evening provided an opportunity for meaningful, informal interaction, allowing legislators, student pharmacists, and practicing pharmacists to engage in conversation outside of the Capitol setting.

Representative Mike Weisgram (District 24), a strong champion for pharmacy, joined the event and engaged in thoughtful and meaningful conversation with both pharmacists and student pharmacists in attendance. His willingness to listen and participate in open dialogue provided valuable perspective on the policymaking process while also reinforcing the importance of continued engagement between the profession and policymakers.

The following morning, South Dakota State University student pharmacists brought that engagement into action through wellness screenings at the Capitol. Offering services such as blood pressure checks and cholesterol screenings to legislators, staff, and visitors, these interactions provided a visible and tangible example of the role pharmacists play in improving patient care. Just as importantly, they created opportunities for students to connect directly with policymakers in a meaningful and memorable way.



That morning also offers an opportunity to see the legislative process first-hand, by sitting in on committee hearings and even venturing onto the floor of the chambers to introduce themselves to lawmakers. For many students, Legislative Days serves as their first direct exposure to the policymaking process and reinforces the importance of advocacy as a core component of professional practice.



While it's a cornerstone of our efforts during session, Legislative Days is more than a single event. It reflects the ongoing work required to ensure pharmacy is represented in policy discussions. Advocacy does not begin in a committee hearing. It begins with relationships, education, and a willingness to engage. Events like Legislative Days help build that foundation by connecting future and current pharmacists with the individuals responsible for shaping the healthcare landscape.

The role of student pharmacists in this effort cannot be overstated. Their energy, curiosity, and commitment to the profession bring a level of engagement that strengthens every interaction. Through their participation, students gain a deeper understanding of the responsibility that comes with being part of a profession that must continuously advocate for its role in patient care.

That work has not gone unnoticed – make sure you read the SCAPP report to learn more about how this unique brand of advocacy has helped earn them some national recognition.



As SDPhA looks ahead, Legislative Days will continue to serve as a cornerstone of our advocacy efforts. It is an opportunity to build relationships, elevate the voice of pharmacy, and invest in the next generation of professionals who will carry this work forward. **Mark your calendars for next year—Feb. 9-10, 2027.**



# MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**Kirck Wilson** (Martin) did two presentations at Bennett County High School Fri., April 10 as part of their career day. Wilson spoke to the students about various career options in pharmacy, including work as a pharmacy technician, and the important role they play on the pharmacy team.



**Jim Bregel** (Chamberlain) Represented Lewis Drug at the Camp Med program at St. Francis Indian School March 25, 2026, where he introduced students to the opportunities and rewards of a career in pharmacy.



**Ben Ostebee** (Sioux Falls) and **Shane Clamabeau** (Fort Pierre) met with Sen. Mike Rounds Tuesday, April 15th to talk about issues facing pharmacy in South Dakota as part of the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) annual fly-in event.

**Show Us What You're Up To!**  
Email your photos to  
[sdpha@sdpha.org](mailto:sdpha@sdpha.org).



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- The Alliance for Patient Medication Safety (APMS) is a non-profit Patient Safety Organization (PSO) established in 2005 by NASPA. APMS is a federally listed Patient Safety Organization (PSO), which means pharmacy members participate in continuous quality improvement activities in a secure, legally protected environment.

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[info@medicationsafety.org](mailto:info@medicationsafety.org)

# South Dakota's PBM LAWS IN ACTION

With HB 1135 (2023) now the law in South Dakota, our focus has been **assessing how it works in practical application** for regulating Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs). We find there are somehow still people who are unaware of the regulations, and the processes for filing a complaint. **SDPhA is planning exciting upcoming educational opportunities** on these topics, and we encourage you to keep an eye out for emails, posts, etc. with more details.

In the months that followed HB 1135 becoming law, SDPhA went to work with the South Dakota Division of Insurance (SD DOI) on the process and procedure for filing complaints and violations of the new law. We thank the DOI for bringing us to the table early and often in this process. We collaborated with them to create an intake form that is simple and direct, yet comprehensive.

As a reminder, here are the highlights of the bill:

- **Prohibit direct or indirect retroactive claim adjustments** unless it's the result of a technical billing error, audit, fraudulent or duplicate claim. (Section 13)
- **Prohibit the numerous onerous fees** PBMs charge pharmacies. (Section 14)
- **MAC list regulation** to help ensure pharmacies are paid fairly and transparently. (Sections 15-16)
- **Prohibit a PBM from reimbursing its own pharmacies more** than it does other resident South Dakota pharmacies (Section 17)
- **Strengthens gag clause prohibition** (Section 10)

**In addition, the bill strengthens** audit (Section 4, 7) and reporting (Section 18) requirements for PBMs (including identifying all instances of spread spicing) and establishes the conditions under which the Division of Insurance may suspend, revoke, or deny a PBM's license (Section 19).

**One especially important note – it is incumbent upon us to report issues and they occur and provide the proper documentation.** You need to file complaints **IN WRITING** via the form. A phone call to the DOI is not going to initiate the process. The Division has also hired an investigator and a pharmacist, but the process is still a bit novel for everyone. We are committed to taking the time to work through any issues that arise with the process as we go. You can find a link to the complaint form, and a host of other resources on our new webpage devoted exclusively to [PBM and Payer Resources](#).



## PBM AND PAYER RESOURCES

[Home](#) / [Resources](#) / PBM and Payer Resources

### PBM RESOURCES

[PBM Enforcement](#)

[PBM Complaint Form](#)

### ADDITIONAL PAYER RESOURCES

[South Dakota Medicaid](#)

[Medicaid Provider Enrollment](#)

### PBM REFORM IN SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota Pharmacists Association advocates for meaningful pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) reform that benefits patients and pharmacies together. SDPhA supports efforts in PBM oversight on the federal and state level. We work closely with our South Dakota Congressional Delegation, the South Dakota Legislature, the South Dakota Division of Insurance and other stakeholders to ensure adequate payment and meaningful reform.

References to current SD law for PBMs are linked on right. Should you know of any PBM in violation of this code, we encourage you to file a complaint (link left and below) with the South Dakota Division of Insurance to help enforce law for which we advocated.

### TIPS FOR FILING COMPLAINTS:

- A phone call doesn't do it. You must fill out the complaint form.
- Include a clear and concise description of the non-compliance (i.e., state law prohibits clawbacks and PBMs continue to clawback funds after the point of sale).
- Cite the specific state statute (list on the right).
- Include records/claim/other evidence of the PBMs' violations.
- Include all other information required by the state's complaint form.
- Quantity is important, but quality is too - please make sure you have all the necessary documentation for each complaint.

[PBM Complaint Form](#)

### SOUTH DAKOTA PBM REGULATIONS

**PBM licensure/registration requirement**

[S.D. Laws 58-29E-2](#)

**Prohibition against retroactive claim adjustments**

[S.D. Laws 58-29E-13](#)

**Prohibition against adjudication fees**

[S.D. Laws 58-29E-16](#)

**Fair pharmacy audit procedures**

[S.D. Laws 58-29F](#)

**Prohibition against anti-mandatory mail-order**

[S.D. Laws 58-18-37](#)

**Any Willing Pharmacy**

[S.D. Laws 58-18-37](#)

**Not less reimbursement than PBM-owned pharmacies**

[S.D. Laws 58-29E-19](#)

# SD BOARD of PHARMACY

Tyler Laetch, PharmD // Executive Director

Greetings from the Board Office. April 10th was our last Board Meeting.

We will start off with SB 14 passing. This will allow pharmacies to utilize remote drop sites if they choose to do so to take care of their patients. SB 90 was also passed and signed; this added required data elements from the medical cannabis program so that information can be shared with the PDMP. With this information, the PDMP will have a medical cannabis indicator on a patient if they have a card. This will be a useful tool that can be used by pharmacists and other healthcare providers to have a conversation with the patient around the use of medical cannabis and other drug or disease state issues.

With the law changes, there will be a rule package that will be coming in the next couple of months. Stay tuned for the rule changes package, timeline, and timing for comments will be posted on our website, along with being sent via the listserv. If you are not on our general listserv, you can join by going to [our website](#).

Speaking of [our website](#), we have signed our contract with inLumon for our new licensing software and website development. The programmers have started the early building stages and will be working to have everything changed over in the next few months.

Discussed at the board meeting was to allow P4 students a chance if they choose to take the MPJE early. The board has discussed limiting the early testing to start in October of the P4 year. This will do 2 things. First, this will be one less item for graduates to do after graduation in becoming licensed, and secondly, this will open testing times to take the NAPLEX. This would be an option for SDSU students and will only get one attempt to take early.

The best and most current discussions happen at our quarterly board meetings. We encourage all to attend; people in attendance lead to some great discussions.

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When a claim happens, whether it involves property damage, operational disruption, regulatory matters, or professional liability, the impact can extend far beyond a single incident. It can affect your ability to stay open, serve patients, and protect your livelihood.

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Through a partnership with Pharmacists Mutual, pharmacist members have access to business insurance solutions supported by experienced claims professionals who understand pharmacy operations and healthcare risk.

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When property claims occur, support may include:

- ▶ On-site involvement for significant losses
- ▶ Coordination with contractors, restoration, and mitigation experts
- ▶ Guidance on repairs, timelines, and coverage expectations
- ▶ Support with inventory, salvage, and forensic accounting resources

In 2025, initial contact on property claims averaged just over 4 hours<sup>1</sup>, helping business owners understand next steps and begin recovery sooner.

Shared as part of a marketing partnership between State Pharmacy Association and Pharmacists Mutual.

<sup>1</sup>Based on 2025 first contact times

<sup>2</sup>Based on all professional claims reported 1/1/25-12/31/25

<sup>3</sup>Average cost reference (if applicable per data source)

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**29%**

of pharmacy professional liability claims involve license defense or disciplinary matters<sup>2</sup>

**\$10,579**

Average cost to defend a pharmacy professional liability disciplinary matter<sup>3</sup>

Our claims experts average 25 years of experience and know what to do when there is a claim against your license or from a customer.

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### Because a Claim Shouldn't Be the End of Your Business

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▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶



# South Dakota SOCIETY of HEALTH-SYSTEM PHARMACISTS

Aly Howard, PharmD // SDSHP President



SDPhA President Chelsea Conway and SDSHP President Aly Howard celebrating 50 years of the South Dakota Society of Health System Pharmacists at the SDSHP annual meeting April 17<sup>th</sup> in Sioux Falls. Congrats to SDSHP on this impressive milestone!

## Key Events:

### Social Media Presence

This year, we focused on strengthening our social media presence, spotlighting our Board Members, and the positions they serve with SDSHP. Featuring the “Did You Know” slogan, we hope to continue to leverage this to educate and raise awareness. We also leaned into the “We’re Your Pharmacist” campaign with ASHP. We hope this will continue to connect us to our members and will continue to be a key component of our priorities and strategy moving forward.

### Statewide Residency Conference

Residents from across South Dakota gathered in Chamberlain for the 2025 Resident Conference, a day dedicated to learning and networking. The morning featured an interactive session, “Leadership and Navigating Tough Conversations,” led by Liz Carlson and in the afternoon, pharmacists from around the state delivered a variety of presentations on diverse pharmacy related topics.

### 23<sup>rd</sup> Gary Van Riper Society Open Golf Classic

This was the second year that our West River partners also participated in the event. We continue to explore venues and supplemental activities that promote connection and celebration of the pharmacy profession. This event raised \$1,260 to support the travel for the SDSU Clinical Skills Competition. As always, a special thank you to Tyler Turek for his ongoing commitment to coordinating the event. Haven’t ever golfed it? Check it out!

### Statewide Pharmacotherapy Forum (SPF)

SPF events were held throughout the year in a virtual format, providing convenient lunch & learn opportunities. Residents presented on a variety of clinical topics, supporting both their development and ongoing education for members. Though attendance was variable, we averaged about 20 attendees at each event, and the Board is committed to continuing to evaluate and trial different ways to reach out members.

### After 5 Events

Many After 5 events, including preceptor and new practitioner gatherings, occurred throughout the state this past year. Though attendance was variable, the Board is committed to continuing to evaluate and trial different ways to reach out to members. These events continue to offer valuable opportunities for connection and networking.

### Dose of Giving Pharmacy Week Charity Drive

During October 2025 Pharmacy Week, SDSHP sponsored the first Dose of Giving Charity Drive. This was an opportunity that Avera, Sanford, the VA and Monument Health systems participated in to support Pharmacy Week fun, and needs in their local community. Whoever raised the most items proportional to the members on their team during their charity drive got the honor of considering themselves the First Annual Dose of Giving champion! Congratulations to Sanford USD Medical Center Pharmacy team, who raised 10.3 items per employed team member. In total, the drive raised over 3,200 items for communities across the state!!

### Annual Meeting

This year marks the 50th Annual Meeting! We continue to get excellent keynote speakers and offer high quality CE for our pharmacists and pharmacy technicians throughout the state—a key component of SDSHP’s mission. For the second year, we are hosting our Executive Hour Reverse Vendor Fair, where Pharmacy leaders throughout the state get intimate interaction with some of our vendors. As always, the chance to honor our annual award recipients: Pharmacy Technician of the Year, Rachel Lubbers, Pharmacist of the Year, Katie Hayes, and Gary Karel Lecture Award, Deb Pritchett.

Finally, I also want to extend my gratitude to our outgoing board members: Jenna McGeehon, Morgan Hemmingson and Holly Flynn. Their knowledge, expertise, and dedication have been invaluable. Thank you for all you have done helping myself and the Board navigate the year, and for serving the members of SDSHP!



# COLLEGE of PHARMACY and ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS at SDSU



**Dan Hansen, PharmD // Dean and Professor**



Greetings from the College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions (COPAHP) at South Dakota State University!

## Overall Highlights

This quarter brought continued national recognition and record-setting achievements across COPAHP.

Our 2025 Pharm.D. graduates achieved a 94.1% first-time NAPLEX pass rate, compared to the national of 86.8%. Our 10-year average first-time pass rate is 96.7%, the highest in the nation.

SDSU's 2025 MLS graduates achieved a first-time ASCP pass rate of 89%, surpassing the national first-time pass rate of 79%

The respiratory care program earned two major awards from the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC). The program's East River locations, which include Brookings/Madison, Sioux Falls, and Huron, received the Distinguished RRT Credentialing Success Award. The program's satellite site in Rapid City received the President's Award for Excellence in Credentialing Success, an honor reserved for a select group of programs that meet rigorous criteria.

The Haarberg Drug, Disease and Delivery (3D) Research Center celebrated its first five years of entrepreneurial research. Over that time frame, researchers supported by the Center have formed six companies, filed 12 new patent applications, published at least 32 peer-reviewed manuscripts, and been awarded \$10.3 million in grant funding.

The Board of Regents recently approved two new specializations for the B.S. in pharmaceutical sciences: a marketing and industry specialization and a research and industry specialization. A rural well-being specialization for the Ph.D. in social sciences was also approved.

Anamitro Banerjee, director of global chemistry, manufacturing, and controls regulatory affairs at AstraZeneca, gave the 13th Annual Francis Miller Lecture on Thursday, March 31, 2026. Public Health Day, held April 7, focused on the complex health challenges facing veterans, highlighting both lived experience and professional perspectives. SDSU alumnus Terry Hoffmann, associate chief of pharmacy at the Veterans Affairs Tennessee Valley Healthcare System shared his insights on veteran care.

## Student & Faculty Highlights

Our students and faculty have been busy sharing their work with the broader community this quarter.

Shanna O'Connor, associate professor of pharmacy practice, was named the 2026 Outstanding Researcher at SDSU's Celebration of Faculty Excellence. This quarter, she and her co-authors have published several articles including:

- Expanding Access to MOUD Through Pharmacist Independent Prescribing: Early Findings From a Community Pharmacy-Based Clinical Service in *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association* (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.japh.2026.103048>)
- Evaluating the APhA Foundation Incentive Grants Program: Perceptions from Residency Program in *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association* (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.japh.2026.103025>)

- Student Perspectives of a Rubric-Based Educational Approach for Evaluation of State Pharmacy Regulation in *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning* (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2025.102552>)

The American Academy of Health Behavior recognized Chris Robbins, assistant professor of allied and population health, and colleagues with the 2025 Paper of the Year. The paper, Impact of One-Way SMS Health Communication to Increase PrEP Uptake in Non-HIV STI Testing Patients: A Pre-Post Intervention Study, was published in *Health Behavior Research* (<https://doi.org/10.4148/2572-1836.1315>).

Erin Miller, Gail M. Gullickson Endowed Assistant Professor of Public and Population Health; Alex Middendorf, assistant professor of pharmacy practice; Deidra Van Gilder, interim department head for allied and population health; Jim Amell, Julie Stevens and Dale Evenson Endowed Associate Professor; and colleagues, had an article titled "A Pharmacist-Led Mobile Pop-Up Clinic: Development and Pilot Implementation Outcomes" published in the *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association* (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.japh.2025.102975>).

Tadd Hellwig, professor of pharmacy practice, was awarded the F.O. Butler Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Students' Association Teacher of the Year.

Faculty and staff were recognized at the Spring Convocation and Awards Ceremony. Scout Forbes-Hurd was awarded the Bernard and Elaine Heitbrink Excellence in Teaching. Chris Robbins was awarded the Bernard and Elaine Heitbrink Excellence Research and Scholarship. Chris Francis was awarded the Outstanding Service College Staff Award. Brooke Merry received the Community Service and Outreach award.

Mike Farley was appointed as a Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Equivalency Examination® Review Committee member.

Vijay Mokala, a Ph.D. student in Hemachand Tummala's lab, received the Best Poster Award at the National Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases (CRWAD-2026) in Chicago, presented by the U.S. Animal Vaccinology Research Coordination Network (USAVRCN). The poster was titled "Inulin Acetate Nanoparticles as a Novel TLR4-Based Adjuvant for Influenza Vaccination in Pigs."

One of our 2nd year respiratory care students, Gavin Eischens, participated in the Oral Interp Collegiate National Championship. Gavin and his duo partner placed 1st in the nation in duo interpretation (SDSU's first national champion!) and Gavin got 6th in Program Oral Interpretation.

Finally, we welcomed Briana Gross, a registered respiratory therapist with Sanford Health in Sioux Falls who is licensed not only as a respiratory care practitioner but also as a neonatal pediatric specialist, who began work as the new respiratory care clinical instructor.

# SDSU Student Collaboration for the *ADVANCEMENT and* PROMOTION of PHARMACY

*Ryan Johnson // SCAPP/APhA-ASP SDSU Chapter President*



After enjoying a relaxing winter break, our SCAPP members have taken part in several unique and exciting opportunities this spring semester. At our first chapter meeting, we welcomed Dr. Abigail Riesgraf, a New Practitioner Mentor and past SCAPP member, who spoke about her experiences in pharmacy school and residency. We also held our National Patient

Counseling Competition local event, giving SDSU students the chance to compete and strengthen the counseling skills they have learned in the classroom.



We also held our executive board elections in February and are excited to welcome another strong team to lead our chapter for the 2026–2027 school year:

- SCAPP/APhA-ASP President** – Maggie Kamnikar
- SCAPP/APhA-ASP President-Elect** – Brooklyn Nepodal
- SCCP President** – Kate Hawton
- SCCP President-Elect** – McKenna Walker
- NCPA President** – Ryanna Clauson
- NCPA President-Elect** – Jacey Royalty
- SSHHP President** – Taylor Haring
- SSHHP President-Elect** – Delaney Wilson
- PPA President** – Taylor Stahl
- PPA President-Elect** – Mya Houser
- Finance VP** – Martín Realpe
- Membership VP** – Chloe Hansen
- Policy VP** – Alana Hansen
- Patient Care Coordinator** – Cora Johnson
- Secretary** – Kellen Thomas
- Communications VP** – Emma Reuter
- SDPhA P3 Liaison** – Colton Schamber
- SDPhA P2 Liaison** – Addison Arens



In February, we hosted a Cardiac Ready Community health outreach event in Canton, organized by our SCAPP president-elect, Maggie, in partnership with the South Dakota Cardiovascular Collaborative. This event was a great success, providing community members with free blood pressure, blood glucose, and cholesterol screenings, as well as a free meal. We were able to educate 51 community members and complete screenings for 31 patients.



Another highlight of February was attending Legislative Days at the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre. A total of 28 SCAPP members traveled to represent the SDSU College of Pharmacy and support SDPhA by advocating for our profession. Students valued the time spent with the SDPhA board and are deeply appreciative of their financial support, which made it possible for such a large group to travel and stay overnight. Interacting with legislators and providing health screenings at the capitol was a unique and memorable experience for all who attended.



Other events we have held this spring include “Heart Week,” promoting heart health during American Heart Month through various games and activities; a “Mental Health in Healthcare” interdisciplinary panel featuring pharmacist Dr. Jeremy Daniel and South Dakota physicians Dr. Craig Uthe and Dr. Kelly Evans-Hullinger; a DKMS bone marrow drive; and our annual potluck and auction, hosted in collaboration with AAPS and SDSU Ph.D. students, which provided a meaningful cultural experience and helped fundraise for our chapter.

Towards the end of March, eight SCAPP members had the opportunity to attend the 2026 APhA Annual Meeting and Exposition in Los Angeles, CA to represent our chapter and the SDSU College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions on the national level. Our attendees spent their time exploring downtown L.A., networking with students from across the U.S., and advocating for our profession. We are also proud to announce that our chapter received national first runner-up for the Chapter Achievement Award. In receiving this award, our chapter was specifically recognized for our involvement with SDPhA at Legislative Days. We are truly grateful for this opportunity and for the many others that SDPhA continues to provide for our chapter. In addition, we received a regional award for our involvement through Operation Heart. We are also grateful for the college’s support in helping us attend this event and look forward to attending in Charlotte, NC next year!



Additional events we look forward to this semester include a tour of the Sanford Children’s Castle, a documentary and panel on vaccines, a Brookings Food Pantry volunteer event, and several others.

Reflecting on this school year, it is clear how fortunate we are as a chapter to be supported by SDPhA, the SDSU College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions, and pharmacists across the state. These connections have provided our members with countless opportunities to grow as future pharmacists and to meet many passionate individuals within the profession. We are truly grateful for your generosity and continued support of SCAPP, and we look forward to the exciting things ahead.

# Strengthening the Technician Workforce: SDPhA and PTU

As the demands on pharmacy teams continue to grow, the importance of a well-trained, confident, and capable technician workforce has never been more clear. Pharmacy technicians are essential to supporting patient care, improving workflow, and allowing pharmacists to practice at the top of their license.

For that reason, the South Dakota Pharmacists Association (SDPhA) Board of Directors has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting technician education through continued partnership with Pharmacy Technician University (PTU).

This partnership reflects a broader priority for SDPhA. Workforce challenges remain one of the most pressing issues facing pharmacy across all practice settings, and addressing those challenges requires intentional investment in training, development, and long-term career pathways for pharmacy technicians.

Recent outcomes from PTU reinforce the value of that investment. According to recently released statistics from TRCHealthcare, the parent organization for PTU, in 2025, PTU learners achieved an 81% certification pass rate. That's 17% above the national

average and an improvement over the previous year. These results highlight the impact that structured, high-quality training can have on both learner success and overall workforce readiness.

Building on that momentum, PTU recently announced it has introduced a number of enhancements for 2026 designed to further strengthen certification outcomes, improve learner completion, and enhance the overall training experience.

Updates include expanded assessment tools to ensure learners are fully prepared for certification, with all content aligned to the 2026 Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) exam outline. Additional improvements focus on usability and engagement, including enhanced course navigation, expanded learning formats such as video and interactive content, and a more streamlined course structure designed to reduce fatigue and support completion.

Additional practice opportunities have also been added, including multiple optional PTCE practice exams and expanded question banks with detailed explanations to support deeper understanding.

Together, these updates are designed to better support both learners and employers, making it easier to onboard new technicians, reinforce key concepts, and prepare individuals for certification.

Through SDPhA's partnership with PTU, members of the association receive access to reduced pricing on PTU training modules. This benefit is intended to support pharmacies in developing their teams while helping to reduce barriers to high-quality technician education.

Investing in technician training is not only a workforce strategy, but a patient care strategy. Well-prepared technicians contribute to safer, more efficient pharmacy operations and play a critical role in ensuring patients receive timely and accurate care.

As SDPhA looks ahead, strengthening the technician workforce will remain a key focus. Continued investment in education and training will be essential to supporting pharmacy teams across South Dakota and ensuring the profession is well-positioned for the future.

## Curriculum Built to Meet Your Organizational Needs

- Tailored curriculum, program components, and practice setting-specific courses
- National Standards program to meet state-specific compliance requirements
- Convenient, cost-effective online courses, including real-world scenarios, instructor feedback, and rich media content
- Completion of the assessment will identify the specific PTU 101 courses that need support

### PTU 101

Designed for technicians seeking certification, this program offers 130+ hours of didactic training.

### PTU National Standards

Designed for technicians seeking ASHP-ACPE accreditation, this program offers an entry-level program (400+ hours) and an advanced-level program (600+ hours).

### Knowledge Assessment

Leveraging the support of PTU 101, Knowledge Assessment gauges technician competency in over 10 categories including pharmacology, calculations, laws and regulations, anatomy, compounding, and more.



## Pharmacy Technicians University (PTU) Offers:



Standardized content, developed by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians for the specific work environment and compliance standards your pharmacy technicians must know



Local verification of skills and tools that let students assess their progress through self-study multimedia modules



Robust technician training and resources, presented in various learning modalities



An online didactic training leveraging content developed by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians



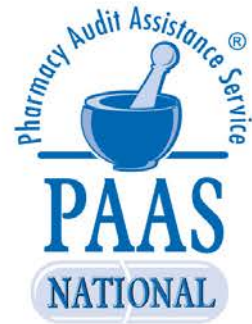
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- ▶ FWA/HIPAA Compliance Program
- ▶ USP 800 Compliance Program

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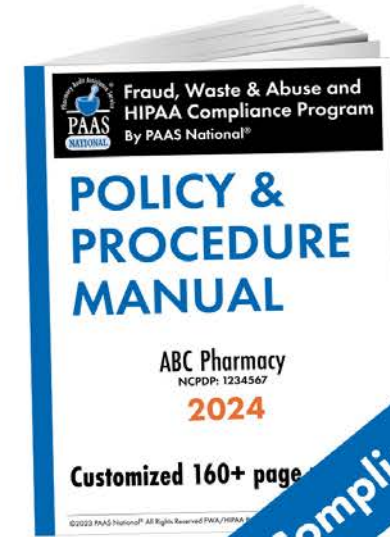
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  - Reviews staff responsibilities for receiving, preparing and administering NIOSH-classified HD
- HD Risk Assessment tailored to your pharmacy for annual review
- Annual USP 800 training for staff

\* excludes HD compounding pharmacies



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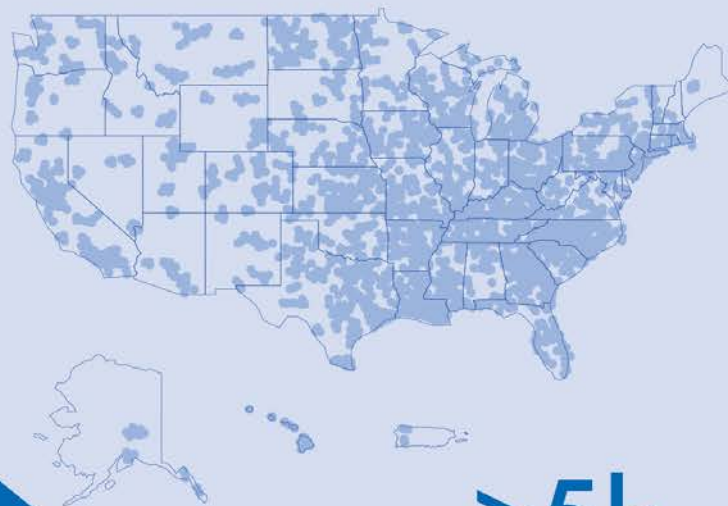


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- FWA/HIPAA membership entitles a pharmacy up to 20 employees. Additional employees are \$15, billed annually.

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## The Cost of Waiting: Delayed Return to Stock Procedures and Their Hidden Audit Risks

Pharmacies face audit risks in their everyday operations, and staying ahead to protect claims from audit recoupments can be exhausting. PAAS National® analysts continue to identify audit recoupments related to return-to-stock violations—an issue that is often one of the easiest to prevent. Establishing clear return-to-stock policies and consistently following them is essential. Failure to do so can almost guarantee recoupments during an audit.

Unfortunately, PBMs often do not consider rationale explanations patients may have for delays in picking up their prescriptions, such as weather conditions, transportation challenges, mental health factors or financial constraints. Pharmacies develop strong relationships with their patients and understand why these delays occur; however, safeguarding your claims should remain a priority.

Recently a common cause of return-to-stock violations is pharmacies providing specialized medication packaging for patients. This process requires additional time, prompting pharmacies to begin preparation early. However, PBMs measure the return-to-stock window from the time the claim is transmitted until the patient receives the medication. Starting the billing process too early can result in dispensing or delivery occurring outside the PBM's return-to-stock policy.

Given the wide variation in policy timeframes, PAAS recommends setting your policy conservatively to ensure all claims are captured within 10 days.

### PAAS Tips:

- With the new year underway, we suggest reviewing your return-to-stock policy
  - Share any changes/updates with your staff and provide dedicated time for employees to complete this task
- Review daily reports that will identify claims with dates outside your policy
- Consult with software vendors to see if Point-of-Sale system edits can be set up with an option to stop claims dated outside your policy from being sold, allowing the claim to be reversed and rebilled
- When patients insist they will be picking prescriptions up shortly, simply reverse and rebill to restart the clock
- Completions of partially filled prescriptions are also required to be dispensed within return-to-stock window
- Closely monitor oversized bins, refrigerator and special-order areas

*Interested in a customized return-to-stock policy? Contact PAAS National® at [info@paasnational.com](mailto:info@paasnational.com) or (608) 873-1342 to get started on the FWA/HIPAA Compliance Program!*

**By Trenton Thiede, PharmD, MBA, President at PAAS National®, expert third party audit assistance, FWA/HIPAA and USP 800 compliance.**

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## Preventing Substitution Errors Among Interchangeable Denosumab Biosimilars

Many pharmacies are familiar with Prolia® (denosumab) for the treatment of osteoporosis in women after menopause who are high risk for fracture or cannot use another osteoporosis medication (or the other medications weren't efficacious). There is another denosumab product (brand name Xgeva®) approved for bone problems due to cancer. Prolia® and Xgeva® are not interchangeable because their strengths and dosing schedules differ.

In 2025, there were at least 14 denosumab interchangeable biosimilars approved for Prolia® and Xgeva® alone. The question with the multiple approved products is how to determine which ones can be used for each of the reference products. The FDA Purple Book is the go-to reference for differentiating between biosimilars and helping with substitution.

One example is denosumab-bbdz (proprietary names: Jubbonti®, Wyost®). Jubbonti® is only interchangeable to Prolia® and Wyost® to Xgeva®. These substitutions can be made without authorization from the prescriber (if your [state law allows](#)). When ordering a denosumab product from wholesalers, you will want to make sure that the one you order is interchangeable to the originally prescribed product..

### PAAS Tips:

- If you are in doubt as to whether products may be substituted
  - Call the prescriber to obtain approval and document with a full clinical note
  - [Contact a PAAS National® expert](#) for assistance

**By Trenton Thiede, PharmD, MBA, President at PAAS National®, expert third party audit assistance, FWA/HIPAA and USP 800 compliance.**

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