

The Nuclear Monthly Missive



Brought to you by the New Practitioner Committee

October 2012

Happy American Pharmacists Month!

Welcome to the first newsletter by the New Practitioner Committee! The Committee's goal is to create a better network among nuclear pharmacists and students, and to provide more information about



the subspecialties available within nuclear pharmacy. To help achieve this goal we will be interviewing a nuclear pharmacist each month in hopes of not only educating new practitioners and students on the various career paths available within nuclear pharmacy, but also fostering a connection between

those new in practice and the more established pharmacists.

As we all know, October is a very special month for pharmacists, in that it is American Pharmacists Month. While we promote this month with APhA's slogan, "Know your MEDICINE, Know your PHARMACIST", it is important for us to recognize those who make us the pharmacists or future pharmacists we are today... the ones who specialize in academia. And although many academicians nurture our growth as pharmacists, Nicki Hilliard stands out as one of the leaders in her field.

Dr. Hilliard is a primarily a nuclear pharmacy professor at the University of Arkansas College of

Did you know...

Did you know that Abbott Laboratories sold the first commercial radioactive drug, iodine-131 human serum albumin, in 1950?

Know your MEDICINE. Know your NUCLEAR PHARMACIST.

pharmacy, where she teaches the radiopharmacy course, coordinates the nuclear program, and helps facilitate internships, interviews, and career day activities for students. But her passion for education also expands to the [Nuclear Education Online](#) program. This program developed from the nuclear pharmacy program, but has since expanded to include courses for nuclear pharmacy technicians, cardiologists, and training for the Department of Transportation (DOT). So what's a typical day like for Nicki? As you may have suspected, there is no "typical" day. Academia is a juggling act, where she

"Nuclear is what I am and I'm glad to represent that on the APhA Board of Trustees."

continually bounces from planning lessons, attending faculty meetings, building continuing education (CE) courses, and managing the online program, including its

marketing and advertising department. To add to her busy schedule, Dr. Hilliard is also very involved in APhA and was elected as the APhA-APPM President-Elect. And guess what! This new position



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Suggestions for next month's newsletter? Contact Ashley Mishoe at AshleyMishoe@me.com.

means that she is the first nuclear pharmacist on the Board of Trustees. She shares her excitement by telling me, “Nuclear is what I am and I’m glad to represent that on the Board of Trustees.” Pretty cool, huh? I think so!

Naturally, there are pros and cons to any area of practice, and academia is no different. Her least favorite part? Writing reports... budget reports, business plans, and the like. However, when asked what she likes most about her job, she responded exactly as you would expect from someone with a such passion for teaching: “working with students and new pharmacists and showing them what an interesting career path nuclear pharmacy can be.”

So you want to become the next Nicki Hilliard? Let’s take a look at how she got to where she is today, what career

“I love nuclear pharmacy and being able to share that with students.”

path she took to become such an inspiring leader in the world of nuclear education. Her nuclear training began with a nuclear rotation in pharmacy school, simply because she wanted to explore all options in pharmacy. After graduation, she took a job as a staff pharmacist with Nuclear Pharmacy Incorporated, and quickly advanced to becoming manager (and by quickly, I mean within 6 weeks). She then held her managerial position for 7 years, during which time she not only began precepting pharmacy students, but also began volunteering to teach nuclear pharmacy courses at the University of Arkansas College of Pharmacy. Dr. Hilliard stresses the fact that it is important to practice in the field before jumping into academia, as this real-world experience offers an unparalleled advantage when teaching others. In 2001, she joined forces with the University of New Mexico and developed the online program we all know today as Nuclear Education Online. How was she able to develop an online program, you ask? Nicki reveals, “I’m a computer geek!”

As the practice of pharmacy is continually evolving, I

was curious to find out where she sees nuclear pharmacy 10 years from now. She theorizes that there will be more emphasis placed on PET radiopharmaceuticals and hopefully more therapeutic applications available. However, she recognizes that supply will always be a challenging obstacle.

If you’re thinking that Dr. Hilliard is all work and no play, think again! Outside pharmacy, she enjoys working with

technology, playing golf, spending time with her family at the lake, and traveling. Fun fact: Nicki loves to dance.

Ballet, tap, and disco are her favorites, but get this: she actually used to be a twirler in college! How impressive is that?



In closing our discussion, Nicki offers several nuggets of advice for those of us just beginning our careers in nuclear pharmacy. She encourages becoming BCNP as a way of validating your knowledge, even if you have no desire to teach, and she noted that studying for the Boards helped her become a better pharmacist. She continues to explain that starting in academia doesn’t have to begin with directing a nuclear pharmacy program, but can be as simple as volunteering to precept students and volunteering to give lectures. The most important thing she recommends? Become involved! Become involved in APhA, volunteer with local pharmacy schools, and share your knowledge and passion with others.

Until next time,

Ashley Mishoe