WINTER 2023 | ADVOCATING FOR

# Celebrating the best of community pharmacy

Join us in recognizing our pharmacists in eight award categories PAGE 12



British Columbia **Pharmacy Association**bcpharmacy.ca





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ON THE COVER

Award winner Sylvie Fraser, Ben Gant Innovative Practice Award recipient, poses with her dog Gunner outside her pharmacy.

#### ■ President's Message



Chris Chiew

#### Big opportunities on the horizon for British Columbia pharmacists

It's hard to believe after what's felt like a very long year, we've leapt into 2023 headfirst. I'm honoured to be your president for the year, and we have a lot on the horizon.

Last year B.C.'s community pharmacists continued to deliver amazing care to British Columbians. More than 3.7 million COVID-19 and influenza vaccines were given in community pharmacies. This is more than we've ever given before, and we were still providing flu vaccines and COVID-19 boosters in early

Across the country, provincial governments are grappling with how to deal with the primary care crisis.

In the midst of the growing crisis, community pharmacists have continued to step up, as always. Our work is being recognized.

Last fall, our Health Minister Adrian Dix announced plans for pharmacists to be able to prescribe for minor ailments and contraception this spring 2023. We continue to be thankful to Minister Dix and this government for their leadership and timely response to what is a growing health care crisis in primary care for British Columbians.

This spring will be a busy one for the Association as we work with the Ministry of Health and the College of Pharmacists to enable prescribing authority for community pharmacists for minor ailments and contraception. Work has already begun.

In this issue of *The Tablet* we profile the 2022 Excellence in Pharmacy Award winners. They are the face of our profession. Individuals who have made a difference to Indigenous peoples and their relationships with pharmacy, to patients with opioid use disorder, to remote communities and to entire communities.

Health care and its delivery is all about people and serving their needs. It's about being there when patients who are seeking care need us. It's clear that our winners are examples of this.

Decision makers and patients know we've been there for them during the pandemic. With prescribing on the horizon, let's continue to show them how pharmacists are a key partner in ensuring patients have access to primary care.



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Contributors ■ CEO's Message



Geraldine Vance

#### Patients can count on pharmacists to get the job done

Are you one of those people who make resolutions? Do you set intentions for the year ahead? Manifest your success? Whether or not you make resolutions, I think all of us look at the first of the year as a time to reset, look forward and hope the year ahead holds good health, happiness and success.

As B.C.'s community pharmacists look ahead this year, there is a great deal to be optimistic about. In what we all hope was the last year of the COVID pandemic, 2022 was an outstanding year, and pharmacists continued to overachieve in terms of meeting the needs of patients.

The COVID and flu campaigns were no small challenge and were spurred with a big push for both in the fall. And while the final numbers are being tallied, pharmacists completed a dual vaccination campaign in a single season, with higher numbers for the flu campaign than ever before. Incredible work.

There were some hiccups related to timing of supply for the flu campaign this year, but it seems clear that direct distribution and the ImmsBC booking system enabled pharmacists to immunize more people in a condensed period of time. We all know that immunizations save lives and prevent serious illness. The major public vaccination campaigns and the key role pharmacists play are an essential part of ensuring the health-care system overall can keep up with the increasing demands placed on it.

And, while all the heavy lifting was being done for the two concurrent vaccination campaigns, pharmacists were ramping up in response to the changes to PPP-58. Early indications are that pharmacists have done record numbers of adaptations and renewals — a true sign of just how needed this support for patients is across the province.

It has been genuinely inspiring to see how pharmacists have continued to rally and help their patients. I have no doubt that all of your patients appreciate that they can count on their pharmacist to fill the gaps and provide access to the essential medications they need.

And so, what does 2023 hold for pharmacy in B.C.? A great deal of promise. As you will all know, later this year, B.C. will introduce prescribing by pharmacists for common ailments and contraception. This is sure to be as well received by patients as the access to vaccines and the ability to adapt and renew almost all prescriptions. I know this new work will provide stimulation and professional satisfaction to pharmacists who have been anxiously waiting for increased scope of practice.

COVID has shown the vulnerabilities in our health-care system, but it has also shown the strengths. Community pharmacists have shown if given the opportunity they will get the job done.

Wishing each of you a very successful 2023.

The Tablet asks our contributors:

What are you most looking forward to in pharmacy for 2023 and why?



Maria Kwari has been a pharmacist since 2002 and owns seven pharmacies in the Vancouver Island

and Lower Mainland regions. "I think the big thing we're most excited about is prescribing rights. We have the knowledge. and with the right training, it will be really great for us and our patients for pharmacists to be able to contribute to the healthcare system and help our patients in a quicker manner."



Sahil Ahuja is a pharmacist and community relationship manager at Two Nice Guys

Pharmacy in Kelowna, and the winner of this year's Collaborative Care Award. "I am most excited about having a new way to relieve some of the burden on the health care system!"



**Jason Buerfeind** is pharmacy manager at Armstrong Pharmacy and Wellness Centre

and winner of this year's Excellent in Patient Care Award. "I am looking forward to be able to use our enhanced pharmacy services to benefit our community and our patients, and to play a bigger role in our patients' lives."

## Preparing for a College Practice Review

A MESSAGE FROM THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Practice Review Program (PRP) is a review of a pharmacy professional's practice and the pharmacy where they work. The program aims to protect public safety by improving compliance with College Bylaws and Professional Practice Policies and ensuring consistent delivery of pharmacy services across B.C.

Pharmacies and pharmacy professionals are reviewed to ensure they meet College standards. The Program's multi-year time frame allows for all pharmacies and pharmacy professionals currently practicing in B.C. to be reviewed on a cyclical basis.

The PRP is split into two components: the *Pharmacy Review* and the Pharmacy Professionals Review.

When selected, pharmacy managers, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians will receive advance notice of an upcoming review, as well as the areas that the College will focus on during the review.

Practice reviews are based on College Bylaws and Professional Practice Policies. Reviews are conducted by a team of Compliance Officers who are all registered pharmacy professionals employed by the College. Compliance Officers record and document areas of compliance and non-compliance while observing pharmacy professionals throughout the review process. For areas of non-compliance, action-items are assigned, if necessary.



Are you or your pharmacy undergoing a review? The following tips will help you prepare for an upcoming Pharmacy Review and/or Pharmacy Professionals Review:

#### Preparing for a *Pharmacy Review*: Complete a pharmacy pre-review

Once a pharmacy is selected for a Pharmacy Review, the pharmacy manager will be required to complete and submit a pre-review to the College prior to their assigned deadline. The pre-review outlines the Pharmacy Review criteria that Compliance Officers use when conducting the review, so there are no surprises. The requirements included as part of the pre-review and Pharmacy Review can be found in the Hospital Pharmacy and Community Pharmacy Review Forms.

#### Preparing for a *Pharmacy Professionals* Review: Review the PRP support tools

Pharmacy professionals who are selected for their Pharmacy Professionals Review can prepare by reviewing the PRP Support Tools. These tools provide comprehensive outlines of the requirements that comprise each of the four PRP focus areas for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in both hospital and community practice. Although not mandatory, reviewing the support tools is encouraged as it will give the pharmacy professional a transparent overview of specific areas Compliance Officers will assess during their Pharmacy Professionals Review.

#### **PRP Support Tools for Hospital Practice**

- Patient Identification Verification
- **Profile Check**
- Counselling
- Documentation
- Collaboration
- **Product Distribution**

#### PRP Support Tools for **Community Practice**

- Patient Identification Verification
- **Profile Check**
- Counselling
- Documentation
- Collaboration
- **Product Distribution**
- Practice Toolcard for Safe Drug Therapy

#### **Review PRP Insights Articles**

PRP Insights is an article series written by Compliance Officers. These articles often focus on common areas of non-compliance as identified by Compliance Officers during reviews. By identifying and clarifying common areas of non-compliance, these articles are a useful resource for pharmacy professionals to review and improve compliance with College bylaws and policies within their practice. Staying up to date with these articles can also help inform pharmacy professionals of current issues in pharmacy practice.

For more information about the Practice Review Program, please visit: https://www.bcpharmacists.org/practice-review-program





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## Honouring Pharmacy Excellence

Each year, the BC Pharmacy Association Excellence Awards are presented to the province's most deserving pharmacists and allies of the profession. This year included the award categories in Excellence in Patient Care, New Practitioner, Collaborative Care, Leadership, Mentorship, Innovative Practice and Friend of Pharmacy! Congratulations. BY MICHAEL MUI

## Jason Buerfeind EXCELLENCE IN PATIENT CARE AWARD

TITLE Pharmacy Manager

**WORKPLACE** Guardian Armstrong Pharmacy & Wellness Centre

**LOCATION** Armstrong, B.C.

There is nothing like the lack of a hospital or even a walk-in clinic in a community for patients to realize how important their pharmacist is. Such was the experience for Excellence in Patient Care Award recipient Jason Buerfeind, on the third year of his post at Guardian Armstrong Pharmacy and Wellness Centre.

His pharmacy is a bastion of health services for the community of Armstrong, a small municipality at the halfway point between Vernon and Salmon Arm, home to a population of about 5,000 and a regular stop for tourists visiting the north Okanagan.

In just three years since deciding to call the area home, Buerfeind has been tasked numerous times to triage an enormous number of health issues, whether for developing health issues faced by a local, emergency requests by tourists seeking first aid, or even by those seeking a novel made-in-pharmacy solution to get the kids to sleep.

"A good patient of ours just called up the pharmacy and said, 'I made a monster spray, some Lysol, sprayed it around the room to keep the monster away, but the kid didn't buy it," Beurfeind said.

"I basically mixed up some water and put some mint extract, slapped a label on there 'Monster Spray' ... gave her the bottle with the label on it and it says 'spray once in your bedroom every night to stop monsters' and I put an expiry to make it look nice and official ... I know there has been no monster since the monster spray!"

In a more urgent example, Buerfeind recalled how a patient walked into his pharmacy and explained that she had been stung by a wasp, and was seeking directions to a hospital. She had suffered anaphylactic shock from a sting before, Buerfeind recalled, and the urgency was high.

"I had to kind of tease out of her that she had an anaphylactic reaction to stings from the past and she's kind of concerned about it. I'm concerned now too," Buerfeind said. "If you've had anaphylactic reaction in the past, there's a good chance it might happen again."

Buerfeind jumped into action and helped the woman administer epinephrine while 911 was called.





#### Awards Feature

"You never want to administer medications that a patient doesn't need, but when she mentioned that she had anaphylactic anaphylaxis in the past, I'd like to catch this reaction before it happens ... it's kind of that spur of the moment type thing," he said.

Another time, a local resident had sliced her hand open while trying to change the batteries on her television remote control. She needed stitches and decided to go to the pharmacy.

"A remote control. I guess what she did was she's trying to open it up with a knife, unscrewing this remote, and her hand slipped. So she's bleeding, dripping blood, and she wanted me to stitch it up. I used Steri Strips and called the ambulance, it's about being that first line of contact for patients when they have that medical need," Buerfeind said.

"I've had people have heart attacks here, we've administered aspirin and nitroglycerin while the ambulance arrives. Fainting seizures, we've had a few of them. This is all in the last few years."

Born and raised in Alberta, Buerfeind accidentally discovered the north Okanagan by chance, during a road trip through B.C. to surf in Tofino. The area struck him so strongly that he decided to spend a few extra days exploring the region during his trip. Eventually, he began visiting the north Okanagan during holidays and long weekends.

"And then we started thinking why just spend our weekends here? Why not just live there and every day can be a weekend?" Buerfeind recalled.

Since moving to the area, Buerfeind spent his time at a busier pharmacy in Vernon before an opportunity to become pharmacy manager at the Armstrong pharmacy opened up. What was surprising for him was that, though he was not permitted to notify his patients where he was moving, many tracked him down and followed him to the new pharmacy.

"I had about 60 patients following me out there," Buerfeind said. "That was pretty cool. It's like, if there's that much interest in what I'm doing, I must be doing something right."

## Justin Dovale & Sahil Ahuja COLLABORATIVE CARE AWARD

TITLE Co-Owner / Pharmacist workplace Two Nice Guys Pharmacy

**LOCATION** Kelowna, B.C.

#### Justin Dovale

The timing was right for Collaborative Care Award recipient Justin Dovale. The former hospital pharmacist opened his own community pharmacy in March 2021, right at the height of the pandemic. It was a decision that proved to be instrumental in positioning his new business as a provider of solutions for public health.

Along with business partner Chris Kemppainen, the two decided to name their pharmacy after themselves: Two Nice Guys Pharmacy.

"Our goal right off the bat was just to help solve problems and fill gaps in the health-care system. From my experience in the public sector, I realized that there are a lot of places where community pharmacy can step up," Doyale said.

One urgent area Dovale and his team quickly stepped up to was the issue of opioid agonist treatment patients becoming sick with COVID-19, and due to public health restrictions, could no longer come into their regular pharmacies for their witnessed doses while isolating. Unfortunately, many pharmacies in the region simply were not equipped with delivery services.

Dovale decided to take on those patients and began making deliveries to several dozen opioid agonist treatment patients who were isolating at home or in public health funded hotels.

"We took in lots of referrals and we started delivering," Dovale said. "And from there, we ended up getting connections back to the providers, whether at the OAT clinic or Outreach Urban Health, at the hospital — social workers and discharge coordinators at the hospital — and that's really how we built up our reputation."

Typically, Dovale would receive a call from a patient's social worker or physician to notify that the patient has caught COVID-19. At that point, Dovale would work with the patient's health team to determine when the patient's deliveries would begin and to ensure the patient's prescription is valid for Dovale's pharmacy.

"A lot of times the conversation is simply logistics. But other times we'll be talking drug interactions, for example, if someone isn't well managed on Kadian, what could we do as an alternative? Or how could we bridge someone on Suboxone until their next Sublocade injection ... a lot of times it's really just about making sure people aren't experiencing any breaks in therapy," he said.

Through this work, Dovale has created close relationships with numerous physicians, public health pharmacists and other care providers in the region. Many are on a first-name basis with him and have exchanged cell numbers.

"Literally just picking up the phone or sending a text message after hours and getting a new prescription started or something changed, other pharmacies might have to wait until the next business day," Dovale said. "Sometimes it helps to go straight to the provider, and the fact that we can do that and the fact that they trust us ... it's been a real game changer."



#### Sahil Ahuja

For Collaborative Care Award recipient Sahil Ahuja, there is nothing that demonstrates the expression 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts' better than collaboration in the delivery of health care. The 2019 graduate had already worked with one of the owners at Two Nice Guys Pharmacy at a previous community pharmacy when he was offered the opportunity to join the team.

In the early days, however, business at the pharmacy was slow. The pharmacy had just opened in the middle of the pandemic and the volume of prescriptions was not high. Ahuja decided he needed to do something about that.

"You're here for a full eight to 10 hours and there's no scripts. We had all the time in the world. With all that time, what I started doing was reaching out to local organizations, whether it was the Canadian mental Health Association, or charities or other organizations, just to see, what are their pain points? We have all this time in the world to help them address that," Ahuja said.

"Where it really got started, we got a phone call

from the pandemic health coordinator for the Okanagan region. Through the grapevine, she had found out that we do OAT delivery directly to patients. She asked if we could help."

Ahuja at that point had already been doing deliveries, sometimes personally delivering the medications, to existing opioid agonist treatment patients at Two Nice Guys Pharmacy who were isolating due to COVID-19. It was easy for them to expand that service to those who needed their treatment, but were unable to secure deliveries.

He sees this level of collaboration, between physicians, public health and pharmacists, as a force multiplier when it comes to what can be achieved as

"There are so many things that are really difficult for other parts of the health-care system to solve. For example, delivery. It relieves a tremendous burden for them, which then opens them up to do that they need," Ahuja said.

"I truly believe that collaboration is a 1+1 equals 11 situation."

Sahil Ahuja (left) and Justin Dovale (right), pictured inside Two Nice Guvs Pharmacv in Kelowna, are the winners of the 2022 Collaborative Care Award.

#### Candy-Lea Chickite FRIEND OF PHARMACY AWARD

Project Manager, TITLE

Healthy Medications Use Project

**WORKPLACE** First Nations Health Authority

Campbell River, B.C. LOCATION

Acknowledging the patient. Being compassionate. Taking that extra time. Being knowledgeable about the topic. These are all qualities that could help create a more inclusive environment for First Nations patients visiting community pharmacies in B.C.

That was the observation of 2022 Friend of Pharmacy Award winner Candy-Lea Chickite, Project Manager for the Healthy Medications Use Project at the First Nations Health Authority. Since 2017, Chickite has spent a significant amount of time communicating the types of pharmacy services available for First Nations communities, while working with community pharmacies to ensure they demonstrate best practices when serving First Nations community members.

Chickite is a member of the We Wai Kai First Nation, based on Quadra Island and Campbell River, where her son, Ronnie Chickite, serves as Chief. She spent much of her earlier years as a fisher of salmon and herring. In more recent years, the fishing industry has taken a downturn, prompting Chickite to start exploring other opportunities.

"I had to find other things to do, and I've actually been out of the industry since 2011," Chickite said. "The one thing that my husband used to always say, 'The tide waits for no man,' and you know, you can just apply that to almost anything. That's one of my life lessons to live by, don't let things pass you by."

Since joining the FNHA, Chickite has been a crucial bridge to link First Nations community members and pharmacy services in their communities. Chickite's work initially involved communicating knowledge on the changes brought by PharmaCare Plan W transitioning to replace Health Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits Program in 2017. Today, she works on making sure First Nations communities are continuing to build their own relationships with pharmacies, and also manages a medication return grant to help communities dispose of expired medications. More recently, Chickite has been working with the University of B.C.'s

Pharmacists Clinic to develop culturally safe and inclusive pharmacy services.

"Pharmacists can be seen as a person of authority. When we go up to the counter and present the prescription, you always hope that everything will be covered or that the pharmacist will know what to do in case a particular medication isn't on the formulary," Chickite said.

"And really, all we can do is place it in the pharmacist's hands. So making sure that there are good relationships between pharmacists and First Nations peoples and communities as a whole really help engage and foster that trust."

For many First Nations community members, visiting the pharmacy may be a daunting experience due to a lack of knowledge about drug coverage or drug interaction. First Nations community members then rely on pharmacists to be not only proactive about knowing the information, but also sharing it.

"I'd heard stories where people were not getting the medications they needed, but it was because, maybe, it was a billing piece that needed to be fixed. If we're not under NIHB anymore, then it's not going to show up as a benefit. There was a whole bunch of things," Chickite said.

Over the past five years, Chickite has noticed that her efforts are working. More pharmacies are now aware of the importance of delivering good quality, patient and compassionate care particularly for First Nations community members.

"I think I'd really just like to tell all of those pharmacists out there who I know have all those great interactions with their customers, I want to thank them. I want to thank them for all they've done, everything they're doing now and everything they'll continue to do in the future," she said.

"Because those good feelings at the pharmacy counter don't just end when that person turns away and walks out the door. Those interactions stay inside. People remember those for a very long time. So, my hands are raised to those pharmacists. Thank you."





## Sylvie Fraser BEN GANT INNOVATIVE PRACTICE AWARD

TITLE Pharmacy Manager and Co-Owner WORKPLACE Central Drugs Pacific Station

LOCATION Nanaimo, B.C.

(Left) Central Drugs co-owner Sylvie Fraser is the winner of the Ben Gant Innovative Practice Award. (Right) Fraser's dog, Gunner! Growing up, Ben Gant Innovative Practice Award recipient Sylvie Fraser was always surrounded by animals. Her family lived on a farm, she rode horses competitively, and there were always pigs, chickens and dogs roaming around the property.

Had her life turned out a bit differently, she might have pursued veterinary medicine, just like her father did before her. It was a professor during university who convinced her to investigate organic chemistry and pharmacology, leading her to applying to the University of B.C.'s pharmacy program, which she graduated from in 2016. Since then, she's come full circle, and many of her pharmacy patients today are animals from the community around Nanaimo.

"I honestly didn't even know that community pharmacies really dealt with animal prescriptions and that wasn't something that was on my radar until I moved to Central Drugs and started working in compounding," Fraser said.

That was in 2018 when Fraser first joined Central Drugs. At the time, the banner was expanding to a new location that would include a compounding pharmacy at its Pacific Station location. Fraser

was tasked to build up the pharmacy, and quickly found a niche she enjoyed through working with veterinarians in the community.

"Since I've been here, we've grown the practice probably to three times the size in terms of our animal population patients that we service," Fraser said. "I've made great connections with a lot of the veterinarians, there's probably 10+ clinics in the area that we work with. I would say we have grown the business into that area."

For Fraser, innovation in pharmacy means pushing the boundaries to create more opportunities for pharmacists, continually learning and growing, and keeping up with changes in how the community is accessing health care. Her pharmacy's focus on animals has been a great fit, particularly for the many first-time pet owners who got adopted or purchased companion animals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Compounding allows us to be very creative. It's almost like an art and a science combined," she said. "One particular animal was this cat that would not take a pill, would not take a liquid no matter what flavour we tried. We tried a fish paste,

a smoothy slurry of different fish, and it would not take any medications orally.

"So we actually worked with the vet to come up with multiple different transdermal delivery systems for the medications ... that was a really cool case. We went from the cat not taking four to five different medications to just putting it in the ear."

On any given day, about a third of the medications being compounded at Fraser's pharmacy will be for animals, with the rest going to humans. And it's not just cats and dogs that Fraser helps treat, either.

"We get referred patients who are really teeny tiny, like a couple hundred grams to horses who are thousands of pounds," she said. "You might think of animals as dogs, cats, bunnies, horses, but we have a veterinarian in Nanaimo who sees more exotic animals ... we do get prescriptions for those exotic animals, snakes, bearded dragons, geckos and stuff too."

Regardless of whether Fraser is working with a human or animal patient, she keeps one goal in mind: helping the patient recover from sickness or helping manage an ongoing chronic condition. The pharmacy also goes beyond that to help animals organizations in the community as well, including making donations to local animal rescue shelters and the B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

"We treat all of our patients with genuine care," Fraser said. "Animals are a member of the family. Owners come in and they're very distraught oftentimes, their animals are sick and it's like a kid, right? It's like a member of their family." 66

We treat all of our patients with genuine care. Animals are a member of the family. Owners come in and they're very distraught oftentimes, their animals are sick and it's like a kid, right? It's like a member of their family.

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## Riz Gumpac NEW PRACTITIONER AWARD

TITLE Pharmacy Manager

WORKPLACE Ucluelet Co-op Pharmacy

LOCATION Ucluelet, B.C.

Through the forested, winding turns of the Pacific Rim Highway, a narrow twisting path of pavement cut into the side of mountains, the dense trees suddenly vanish and reveal the majesty of the western face of Vancouver Island, where the last rays of the sun can be seen dipping into the Pacific.

Here is the destination of adventure-seekers, of surfers, of explorers of the wilderness, of tourists; it is the home of First Nations communities from time immemorial, of settlers from generations past, and of new arrivals, young families and professionals wishing to experience life at the edge of the world.

Ucluelet. For the past two years, 2022 New Practitioner Award recipient Riz Gumpac has established himself as a cornerstone of this community's health. It was only 2018 when Gumpac graduated from the University of Saskatchewan's pharmacy program. Since then, he has spent short periods working in Saskatchewan, then in Alberta, before a stint in Abbotsford where he learned of a relief opportunity in Ucluelet.

"So I Googled it," Gumpac said. "I saw it on the map, I thought, I haven't been there before and it might be a good opportunity to go into a small community and see what it feels like in terms of pharmacy practice."

At first, he didn't think he would stay.





#### Awards Feature



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It's important to understand the patient population in wherever you want to practice and focus on how you want to uplift your community through your services.

"I did not expect myself to be here two years later. This is very remote for me, especially, I'm a city boy. But then I just fell in love with the community when I was here. The people are very nice. They're very welcoming. They wanted me to stay, so I took the opportunity to become pharmacy manager."

It was good timing. The Co-op at that point had just completed renovations and had taken over the space previously occupied by an independent pharmacy. On the flip side, this meant Gumpac had to begin this chapter of his life just as the pandemic was at its peak.

"I didn't know how to handle it at first, what to do with it and how to run the practice. No one knows how to run something in a pandemic, right?" he said.

Over time, Gumpac began developing an understanding of the community's needs, of how his services could best benefit the community, and also how to work in an integrated manner with other health professionals in town. The remote nature of the community means that health resources are often understaffed, and Gumpac and his small team at Ucluelet Co-op Pharmacy are often pushed to practice their full scope. Sometimes, this means having to

spend seven days a week at work.

"Health care is a team process. I can only do so well because of the people that I work with, and that includes the nurses in Hitacu, my past and present co-workers, doctors and town and definitely the medical office assistants and hospital nurses up in Tofino and other health professionals in our area," Gumpac said.

Earlier this year, in May, Gumpac was named employee of the month at the store after receiving a nomination from a patient for the store's Excellence Award for Outstanding Service.

"It was an awesome feeling to have. A patient of mine was so happy that she mentioned on the nomination how she was taken aback with how I followed up with her in terms of her care. I chased her down an aisle just to see how she was doing, to tell her more about the conditions she had, and she was very appreciative,"

Gumpac has also grown to love the recreational aspect of Ucluelet during his time here. He has even convinced a fellow University of Saskatchewan classmate, pharmacist Mandy Turnbull, to join him at the Co-op.

"This is definitely a fun outdoor community. I started learning how to surf, most of the time I do hikes and I'll do some biking here too. Just having talks with the local people is a good way to connect with them and the area where I am living in. Basically digging your roots," he said.

As for advice he has to offer for fellow new practitioners, they should pick a specialty, Gumpac suggested.

"Coming out of school, you have to ask yourself, "How do you Pharm?" How do you want to practice pharmacy. Pick up things that interest you in school, run with it, specialize in it, focus in it and see what you want to practice," he said.

"It's important to understand the patient population in wherever you want to practice and focus on how you want to uplift your community through your services."



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Abbreviations: IIV-HD: high dose inactivated influenza vaccine IIV-SD: standard-dose inactivated influenza vaccine IIV3-HD high dose trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine IIV3-SD: standard-dose trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine

References: 1. FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent Product Monograph. Sanofi Pasteur. March 3, 2022. 2. National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2022–2023.

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## Cathie Hamm BOWL OF HYGEIA AWARD

TITLE Pharmacist and Former Owner WORKPLACE Kornak and Hamm's Pharmacy

**LOCATION** Williams Lake B.C.

Cathie Hamm has spent more than 30 years serving the community of Williams Lake. Hamm is the winner of the 2022 Bowl of Hygeia Award. The 30 years serving the community of Williams Lake as the proprietor of Kornak and Hamm's Pharmacy has taught **Bowl of Hygeia Award** recipient **Cathie Hamm** to expect the unexpected.

Recently retired in August this year, Hamm has touched the lives of many in the city, from local medical and veterinarian clinics, those who lived and served at seniors care centres, the decision-makers who run the city, to the generations who grew up visiting her pharmacy. She is a lifelong Williams Lake resident, only briefly leaving to attend university, before returning to her hometown to take over the family business in the 1990s.

"Williams Lake, historically, it's ranch country," Hamm said. "When you first come into town it comes across as a rough cow town or a mill town ... but it's also got this whole great vibe around it. It's a mountain biker town. It's a naturalist town. It's a bird-eco friendly town. There's a huge hippie population. The artistic community is incredible. There's artists, potters, and weavers all over the countryside."

In this community, it can be easy to make assumptions about the rough loggers, the cowboys roaming on the ranches, or the younger members of the community and their clothing choices. But Hamm has long learned that those assumptions are often incorrect.

"Somebody who you might think is a street person is an incredible artist," Hamm began. "The guy with the dreads, he's this mountain biker who's having a whale of a good time. I worked at the old folks home ... there was this guy living there, this crochety old guy, he's out in his wheel chair and across the street, there's these whole bunch of young, what we would call punks hanging around.

"The guy fell out of his wheelchair. I saw it and thought, I'm going to go get help. But by the time I thought of that, all these punks had gathered around him, and they picked him up, put him back in his wheelchair and made sure he got home safely."

But seeing the community at their best can also result in bittersweet moments.

Often, a patient is regularly visiting Hamm's pharmacy because they are at their worst, perhaps during a time when they are struggling to manage health conditions. Sometimes, people don't recover. In some other occasions, time was simply up for the patient.

"I started working in the pharmacy when I was 15. I got to know people and I got to know their kids, and all of a sudden, their grandkids are suddenly on birth control. How did all these kids grow up and become adults? That's what really being a part of a community is. It's watching the whole cycle," Hamm said.

"The hardest part about pharmacy is you get to know people. And often it's their death journey. That's what you're there for, you're there to help them."

For herself, Hamm has found her own passion to be theatre. She has acted, directed and managed the logistics of putting on live theatre at the Williams Lake Studio Theatre for the past 15 years. It's become Hamm's own creative outlet, as painting was for her mother, also a pharmacist, who owned the pharmacy before her.

In her retirement, Hamm plans to start taking up painting as well, and enjoying more of the adventures that Williams Lake has to offer.

"It's really come home to me, because the hardest day of a play is actually takedown day. All of a sudden, everything's gone, and you're so relieved because you're exhausted and you need a break," she said.

"We've worked so hard for this. It's done. But it's the complete cycle."





#### Mario Linaksita **MURRAY DYKEMAN MENTORSHIP AWARD**

Pharmacy Manager, Owner TITLE **WORKPLACE** IDA University Pharmacy

LOCATION Vancouver, B.C.

Keep an eye on the details, without forgetting the big picture. It's the piece of advice that leaps into pharmacist Mario Linaksita's mind when he thinks back to the lessons taught by his father.

Now in his early 30s, Linaksita has taken over the family business, serving as owner and pharmacy manager of IDA University Pharmacy, located on the University of British Columbia campus grounds. The winner of the 2022 Murray Dykeman Mentorship Award is regularly a source of advice today, especially due to his proximity to the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, the students within, and the wealth of knowledge he is willing to share.

"It feels right to be here," Linaksita said. "Students are constantly hearing new things that are coming down the pipeline... they'll come here for business ideas for their business class, or if they want a little bit of real world experience. Sometimes they're unsure about the applications of what they're being taught in school and are looking for advice."

Linaksita's father, Christopher Linaksita, first purchased the pharmacy in the 1980s before Mario himself was born just a few years later in 1989. As an infant, the junior Linaksita would spend his days in a crib, at the back of the pharmacy.

"When I was still growing up, I would get stuck into the grind of schoolwork, of socialization, all that kind of stuff, my dad would always say, 'Don't forget. Whether it's an activity, or sports, or schooling — what are you trying to get out of it?"" Linaksita recalled.

"I still have that as like a core value. Keeping an eve on the horizon."

Growing up, he would spend each day at the pharmacy, often helping out, and looking towards the campus grounds.

"Seeing him work, seeing how he interacted with people, that was definitely a signpost for where I should be headed," Linaksita said. "I always thought I would attend the school (UBC).

Pharmacy school was always a goal, and when I got into the pharmacy program, I realized that it had a lot of the same values that were instilled in me ... that inevitably, my values mirrored what pharmacists valued as well."

During his time as a student, he met another valued mentor, Mona Kwong, a clinical instructor at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences. She taught him to push the boundaries. To seek to expand the profession, and to change what has been established.

"At UBC, not that many instructors were focused on the scope and what's next for pharmacy, the potential of pharmacy, and that's what really struck me as different about Mona," he said.

"There was a lot of doom and gloom at the time. It seemed like pharmacists were being pushed to the edge of their capability when it comes to time management but not to their professional capacity, which was quite concerning to me."

That attitude, of pushing the scope and being able to see the potential and opportunities in pharmacy, was a relief to him. In the later years of pharmacy school, Linaksita would observe more mentorship styles during his practicums at different pharmacies, including time spent working at a hospital pharmacy, a pharmacy that works with care homes, a blister pack-only pharmacy, and other experiences.

"There were leaders who were more, team players, there are lone-wolf kind of leaders and there were leaders who were regimented, they wanted things a certain way. I took from each of those styles and made my own: it's more collaborative, but with structure to it," Linaksita said.

In 2016, he returned back to University Pharmacy, taking over as pharmacy manager and owner from his father. It was a strange transition, he recalled, moving from the role of that as a family member — with no formal position at the pharmacy — to that of the leader. In many ways, Linaksita felt he had come home.

Mario Linaksita is the winner of the 2022 Murray Dykeman Mentorship Award. He took over University Pharmacy from his father in 2016.

#### Awards Feature







Above: Mario
Linaksita (in black
mask), winner of
the 2022 Murray
Dykeman Mentorship
Award, teaches a
pharmacy student
how to provide a
vaccine for a patient.

"It felt it was right," he said. And these days, pharmacy students are being taught skills with the expectation that the pharmacists' scope will continue to grow, and that the profession will evolve in the future. No more doom and gloom. At least, that's what Linaksita sees in the pharmacy students who regularly serve at his pharmacy, or who are passing through, seeking advice.

When he meets a new mentee now, he prepares an exchange of expectations.

"I give them my expectations, the ground rules, per se. Then we bring it back to their expectations, what do they need from me to gain an experience that is valuable to them while they're here?" Linaksita said.

At first, Linaksita would aim to provide tailored advice for the students he mentored, expending more research before he provided answers to ensure students received the best advice. But he realized, over time, that most students appreciated getting pointed to the right direction instead.

"You would think that if you researched and gave them the most well-thought out answer, that,

that is the best way to mentor someone," he said. "But I found that, once they have done all their research, they might come up with a different solution ... if you give them your approach to find the answer, you can find the answer together."

Today, Linaksita defines mentorship as helping a mentee through their journey to become the person they will ultimately form. In fact, one of his favourite stories of mentorship was helping guide a pharmacy student through their journey as a pharmacist, and then helping them realize that perhaps pharmacy was not their calling.

"That's just as important as raising a professional who is competent and happy in the profession," he said. "They should become what they want to become, and not be affected by the mentor's thoughts or preconceived notions."

As for those who are just stepping into the role of becoming mentors themselves, Linaksita has this piece of advice.

"Trust yourself. You are in this role because you are capable of doing it. It is a big responsibility. Take it seriously."



#### Awards Feature



Above: Clay Palmer (left), winner of the Pharmacy Leadership Award, consults with Friend of Pharmacy Award winner Candy-Lea Chickite, a member of the We Wai Kai First Nation.

A family friend soon introduced Palmer to Colleen Hogg, the owner of Cove Pharmacy on Quadra Island, just a 10-minute ferry ride from his hometown of Campbell River, as potentially someone he could learn about being a pharmacist from. He decided to drop off his resume.

"She called me the next day," he recalled. "Since 2009 I started as a student, and came back every summer to and have been here ever since... It was the very first place I worked at. I really wanted to make sure it was a career I was interested in."

In 2014, Palmer graduated pharmacy school. By then, he had served in several community pharmacies in Campbell River, worked at St. Joseph's General Hospital in Comox, and also at a community pharmacy in Prince George, before returning to take a position as pharmacist at Cove Pharmacy.

"Quadra Island, it's just a special place, you're not going to find this anywhere else," Palmer said. "I love where I grew up. My wife and I were pretty adamant on coming back all through school. It has anything and everything we want, close access to lakes, water sports, low cost of living, real close, tight-knit communities."

The most rewarding aspect of being a pharmacist, he said, are the patients. Cove Pharmacy is Quadra Island's only pharmacy and its patients are varied. Many patients are members of the local Cape Mudge Band, from the Klahoose Band on nearby Cortes Island, a mix of non-First Nations

local residents and also part-time residents and tourists visiting the community. Some even travel over from the larger city of Campbell River because they prefer Cove Pharmacy.

"People have prescribers and doctors in Campbell River, but they come here and they won't be convinced to go to another pharmacy," Palmer said. "It's a really good feeling. Being the only store on the island and people don't resent that they have to come to you. That's never the case. Everyone comes looking forward to it.

"They see that we're really trying to help. We're not just here to put pills into a bottle."

In November 2022, Palmer was promoted pharmacy manager as the owner prepares to step back from the day to day management. For Palmer, however, his leadership style will be no different to how he has approached the past 13 years of his work.

"A leader is just someone who gives an example that should be followed and encourages people to do the same," Palmer said. "It's going the extra mile. If it's there's some difficulty that arises and it's a challenge that can easily be pushed off or swept under the rug or anything like that, Colleen has always worked to finish it or make the problem go away, or at least have some kind of resolution.

"That ability to just work harder to get the job done, has probably been the biggest thing. And the kindness to everyone, no matter who they are, walking through the door."





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That ability to just work harder to get the job done, has probably been the biggest thing. And the kindness to everyone, no matter who they are, walking through the door.

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## Award-winning qualities you should seek when hiring a pharmacist

BY MARIA KWARI, BSC(PHARM)

Maria Kwari graduated from the University of B.C.'s Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences in 2002 and owned her first pharmacy in 2006. Both her parents were pharmacists and pharmacy owners. Kwari's family owns seven locations, among them traditional community pharmacies and smaller health centre stores. Today, Kwari oversees approximately 100 employees, including pharmacists, nurses and assistants.

Here are the award-winning qualities she seeks when interviewing potential team members for her business.

#### **Patient Care**

When I'm hiring for patient care I am looking for somebody who sincerely cares about their patients and has an extensive knowledgebase. These quality traits are what will separate someone who is excellent in patient care from other pharmacists, and will enable them to provide elevated level of care for our patients.

As a business owner, I want my pharmacies to become a destination for patients when they need medical advice, and for my pharmacist to be that person in the health-care team who can make a difference for the patient. That's especially important in this day and age where getting in touch with a doctor is so difficult, but the patient will always be able to access their pharmacist.

#### Innovation

Innovation within pharmacy is thinking outside of the box. We all have the same training coming from university, to be innovative means you take that training to the next level and apply that knowledge in different ways that will help your practice and help your patients.

This is important, because if you have the passion for a particular field of pharmacy and you can be innovative with it, you're going to try to find different ways to help others. As a business owner, I would like somebody to think outside of the box, who will bring different services to our patients, and who will help our business differentiate ourselves. For example, my most recent hire came up with a migraine consultation, which is something new. In pharmacy I've regularly seen asthma consults and diabetes consults, so migraine consults became this great new service that our pharmacy has been able to provide. It's been very successful.

#### Mentorship

We're not taught business ownership in school. So mentorship for me is to have someone who can teach the practical part of pharmacy, of business ownership and of things that you just don't learn from the books. Personally, I definitely have experienced the benefit of learning from my parents who mentored me. It's guidance and learning along the way. By having a mentor, whether or not the mentor is somebody from the pharmacy industry or not, you learn experiences the mentor has had, that you can gain from and apply to pharmacy.

#### Leadership

A leader ensures things are done properly from start to finish. For example, if I'm looking to hire a pharmacy manager I'm looking for great communication skills and interpersonal skills. They have to be able to follow the pharmacy manager guidelines, but also have the soft skills, such as dealing with people whether it's customers or handling human resources. This means being able read cues from the staff to see what their needs are and the ability to help them with their needs.

#### Collaboration

Pharmacy is only one branch of health and it's our responsibility to become more in tune with how other health-care providers are working with our patients. If we understand what message they're receiving from their physician, the patient will probably listen more to our advice to hopefully improve their health outcomes. Having relationships with physicians who knows and trusts that they can send their patients to you can be important. When a physician trusts you, they will often be more open to your recommendations, since they know you and understand where you are coming from.

#### **New Practitioner**

It can be difficult coming just out of school. You're in a graduating class of 200-plus students who all have the same skills and the same degrees. What we would look for is someone who differentiates themselves and sets themselves apart from others. I would look for somebody who is well-spoken, who has good interpersonal skills, is motivated in what they do, and is somebody who is keen and willing to learn.

#### Community Involvement

Community service is important for the pharmacist to have because it shows they care about their community. Having empathy for those around you is really important and your patients will feel that. If there were two equal candidates in front of me, but one had volunteer experience and the other didn't, I would pick the one with volunteer experience. It shows they have taken the initiative to help their community, and that they've given their time to help others.

As a business owner, I am very thankful to have pharmacists within my teams who have these traits. It has made our teams stronger and has provided inspiration to other pharmacists and staff within our teams. These traits also help foster that sense of community that we look for within our stores. Patients notice it too. They see that the level of care we bring stands apart from many others, and is a big reason why we have a loyal customer base that follows us.

Maria Kwari has been a pharmacist since 2002 and owns seven pharmacies in the Vancouver Island and Lower Mainland regions. When not at work, she enjoys spending time with her family.



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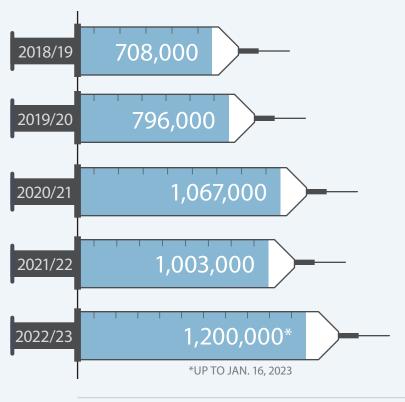
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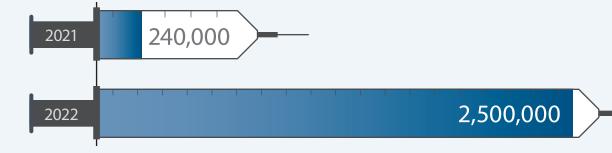
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