

# Advancing Independent Community Pharmacy Sustainability: An APPE Consulting Pharmacy Rotation Experience

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## ABSTRACT

Independent community pharmacies face mounting pressures from declining reimbursement, rising audits, and increasing operational costs, leading to widespread closures and the creation of pharmacy deserts.<sup>1-4</sup>

To address these challenges while enhancing pharmacy education, we have developed an independent community pharmacy consultation service integrated into an Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) rotation. This initiative, led by Chapman University School of Pharmacy (CUSP) faculty, helps provide operational support and innovation at an independent community pharmacy site while offering student pharmacists a unique experiential learning opportunity.

APPE students develop services tailored to the pharmacy's needs which may include implementation of a new patient care service, workflow and quality improvement initiatives, compliance support, and staff training. Through a flexible consultation model, student pharmacists—under faculty supervision—engage in project-based work, combining direct practice with entrepreneurial and business development skills.

Anticipated outcomes include enhanced support of independent community pharmacies, expansion of student rotation opportunities, improved site engagement with the school of pharmacy, and increased student satisfaction through higher quality experiential education experiences.

By aligning the needs of independent community pharmacies with the educational needs of student pharmacists, this model presents a scalable solution to strengthen both community pharmacy practice and workforce development to help address these current challenges in community pharmacy.

## PRACTICE SITE INFORMATION



**Site Name:** Villa Park Pharmacy

**Location:** Villa Park, CA

**Staffing:** 3 pharmacists, 1 technician, 4 cashiers

**Volume:** 800 Rx's per week

**Established Community Presence:** Villa Park Pharmacy has served the community since 1965, owned by only two families in its history

**Comprehensive Services:** 4,000 sq. ft. facility includes a retail pharmacy, naturopathic doctor, gift shop, post office, and travel clinic

## ROTATION OVERVIEW / FOCUS AREAS

### 1. Hybrid 6-Week Elective:

- Consulting projects and on-site practice (e.g. filling/dispensing medications)

### 2. Educational Focus:

- Develop pharmacy specific business plan and presentation
- Tailored to pharmacy site's needs, opportunities

### 3. Weekly Integration:

- Mondays/Fridays: review articles, business planning, project review
- Tuesdays-Thursdays: split between CUSP and pharmacy site to work on project

### 4. Core Learning Activities:

- Harvard Business Review (HBR) and Market-Based Management (MBM)<sup>5</sup> readings
- Leadership and entrepreneurship skill development

### 5. Practice Engagement:

- At least half day per week in pharmacy workflow
- Intern duties and piloting service ideas at pharmacy site

### 6. Mentorship:

- Faculty serve as primary preceptors
- Site pharmacists serve as secondary preceptors

### 7. Assessment:

- Grading: participation, plan quality, presentation, site feedback
- Optional: consulting tools, marketing, research as identified by preceptors and/or student

## WEEKLY ROTATION SCHEDULE

### Weeks 1–2:

- Orientation at CUSP and pharmacy site
- Select and begin developing business plan topic
- Complete foundational readings (HBR and MBM: vision chapter)
- Integrate into pharmacy workflow (dispensing, counseling)

### Weeks 3–4:

- Continue business plan development with site and faculty input
- Assigned readings: MBM: Virtue/Talents and Knowledge Processes chapters

### Weeks 5–6:

- Finalize business plan and prepare presentation
- Assigned readings: MBM: Decision Rights and Incentives chapters
- Deliver final business plan presentation and complete final evaluation.

## ROTATION RESOURCES



Please scan here for copies of rotation materials currently being used

## NEXT STEPS / FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### 1. Exposure to different pharmacy practice sites

- Develop a list of additional pharmacy locations to visit based on the student's identified business idea
- Students gain additional insight into different pharmacy workflows, services, and/or programs to help generate ideas, enhance their understanding of business practices

### 2. Standardize business tools

- Develop "student friendly" business plan templates to help organize student's thoughts and assist them in formatting
- Expand list of external resources and references to help students further develop their business plan

### 3. Development of entrepreneurial curriculum track

- Develop series of didactic and experiential courses at CUSP that includes this APPE experience
- Students would graduate with PharmD and Certificate in Entrepreneurship/Innovation

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