



Walgreens Partners With Colleges of Pharmacy to Advance the Pharmacy Profession

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The Walgreens Deans Advisory Council will collaborate to address key issues, including staffing challenges and decreasing pharmacy school enrollment

DEERFIELD, Ill.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 5, 2024-- As a trusted, convenient local healthcare destination that millions of Americans rely on every day, Walgreens is expanding its long-standing relationships with colleges of pharmacy through the formation of the Walgreens Deans Advisory Council to enhance the pharmacy profession and better support pharmacists as they provide valuable care to their local communities.

The new Council, consisting of 17 pharmacy school deans and Walgreens leadership, is sponsored by Rick Gates, Chief Pharmacy Officer at Walgreens, co-chaired by John Colaizzi Jr., PharmD, FNJPhA, Vice President, Pharmacy Practice at Walgreens and Angela Kashuba, Dean, UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, and Lorri Walmsley, Director, Walgreens Pharmacy Affairs, who will serve as the vice chair.

Pharmacists have been a cornerstone of healthcare in communities across the United States for decades, providing timely interventions and filling gaps in care. While the demand for pharmacy services is expected to increase over the next several years, like many other healthcare entities and a wide range of other industries, pharmacy is facing a pronounced labor shortage.¹ Pharmacy school applications were down 22% in 2022-2023 compared to the previous year and have decreased by more than 60% over the past decade.^{2,3} The pharmacy operating model needs to evolve, and pharmacy school deans are critical partners in helping Walgreens and the industry overall solve for the current workplace challenges that are also impacting pharmacy school enrollment.

"Collaboration within the pharmacy profession has never been more important, and I'm grateful to the many academic leaders who have joined the Deans Advisory Council as we work to transform the future of pharmacy," said Gates. "I look forward to working with the deans to ensure Walgreens expands our reach beyond neighborhood pharmacies into the fast-growing areas of healthcare and drives outcomes that matter most to our pharmacists, patients and partners."

Members of the Council will meet quarterly with the goal of identifying ways to attract, recruit and create a dynamic workplace for current and future pharmacists. The Council's initial objectives include:

- Rebuilding the talent pipeline and focusing on recruitment efforts, including through programs that expose high school students to careers in pharmacy.
- Elevating community pharmacy as a practice setting of choice through direct feedback from colleges.
- Addressing staffing challenges and helping pharmacists experience greater job satisfaction and better patient interactions.
- Evolving the community pharmacy business model and advocating for pharmacist practitioner services.
- Advising on all aspects of community pharmacy strategy, practice and administration-related topics.

"As the recent pandemic highlighted, pharmacists are the most accessible, trusted healthcare providers. They serve as the front door to health in their communities, yet community pharmacy remains one of healthcare's most underutilized resources," said Kashuba. "Our schools train pharmacists to fill healthcare gaps and improve patient care through disease screening, prevention and help patients. I'm excited to collaborate with Walgreens to better align workplace conditions with training to transform the future of community pharmacy."

The Council will serve as a sounding board and play a key role in helping Walgreens build upon recent initiatives deployed by the company to reimagine the community pharmacy operating model. These include: leveraging centralized services and micro-fulfillment, deploying flexible store and staffing models and eliminating all task-based retail metrics from annual performance reviews.

The Council's first meeting is scheduled for early March 2024.

About Walgreens

Walgreens (www.walgreens.com) is included in the U.S. Retail Pharmacy and U.S. Healthcare segments of Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. (Nasdaq: WBA), an integrated healthcare, pharmacy and retail leader. True to its purpose of "more joyful lives through better health," Walgreens has a more than 120-year heritage of caring for communities and providing trusted pharmacy services, and today is playing a greater role as an independent partner of choice offering healthcare services that improve care, lower costs, and help patients. Operating nearly 9,000 retail locations across the U.S. and Puerto Rico, Walgreens is proud to serve nearly 9 million customers and patients daily. The company's pharmacists are playing a more critical role in healthcare than ever before, providing a wide range of pharmacy and healthcare services, including those that drive equitable access to care for some of the nation's most underserved populations. Walgreens offers customers and patients a true omnichannel experience, with fully integrated physical and digital platforms designed to deliver high-quality products and healthcare services. Within the U.S. Healthcare segment, Walgreens portfolio also includes businesses in primary care, multi-specialty, post-acute care, urgent care, specialty pharmacy services, population health and provider enablement.

¹ Statista. Total number of retail prescriptions filled annually in the United States from 2013 to 2025 (in billions). <https://www.statista.com/statistics/261303/total-number-of-retail-prescriptions-filled-annually-in-the-us/>

² The Pharmacy Graduate Application Service. 2022-2023 PharmGrad Applicant Data Report. <https://connect.aacp.org/discussion/2022-2023-pharmgrad-applicant-data-report>

³ Brown DL. Years of Rampant Expansion Have Imposed Darwinian Survival-of-the-Fittest Conditions on US Pharmacy Schools. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2020 Oct;84(10):ajpe8136. <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe8136>



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