



NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE PRESS RELEASE

National medication adherence campaign honors student leaders in multi-profession challenge

Fourth annual Script Your Future contest saw participation by more than 100 health profession schools hosting 400 events in 21 states, and reaching more than 5 million consumers nationwide

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Contact: Carol McKay, carolm@nclnet.org (412) 945-3242

Washington, DC -- Today, the National Consumers League (NCL) and its partners announced the winners of the fourth annual *Script Your Future* Medication Adherence Team Challenge, a competition designed to engage health profession students and faculty across the nation by encouraging teams to develop creative ideas, events, and initiatives to raise public awareness about the importance of medication adherence. This year, the winners are University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, University of Charleston School of Pharmacy, and the Northeast Ohio Medical University College of Pharmacy (NEOMED).

The 2015 Medication Adherence Team Challenge is part of the national *Script Your Future* public awareness campaign coordinated by NCL. The campaign includes more than 135 public and private stakeholder organizations, including Challenge sponsors—the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP), the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) Foundation, the American Medical Association (AMA), the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA), the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN).

“Educating the next generation of pharmacists and other health care professionals is imperative to ensuring that future patients and caregivers practice better adherence,” said Dr. Lucinda L. Maine, Executive Vice President and CEO at AACP. “The *Script Your Future* Team Challenge inspires students to think about new ways to address this issue and encourages innovative strategies to better connect with patients. The creativity and innovation demonstrated by this year’s winners illustrate how our future health care practitioners can and will address medication adherence.”

“We were thrilled to see students work collaboratively - from pharmacy, nursing, medicine, social work and many other health professions - to creatively help patients in their communities improve adherence,” said Sally Greenberg, NCL Executive Director. “This comprehensive approach will ultimately result in patients hearing from multiple

voices encouraging them to take their medication as directed. Poor adherence is a real public health crisis in the United States, but with an emerging generation of health professionals armed to better deal with it, we are optimistic about our future.”

Research shows that nearly three out of four Americans do not take their medications as directed. This may lead to devastating results, particularly for people with chronic conditions. National health advocacy leaders have recognized poor medication adherence as a public health priority, the outcome of which leads to more than one-third of medicine-related hospitalizations and almost 125,000 U.S. deaths each year. Improved medication adherence leads to better health outcomes and reduced total health care costs.

Top-performing teams are honored with a National Award for overall outstanding team achievement, or a Focused Award which recognizes outstanding team achievement in the specific areas of media/communications outreach, health disparity/under-represented community outreach, or creative inter-professional event. This year, the *Script Your Future* National Awards went to the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy and the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, with the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy earning an Honorable Mention. The Focused awardees were: the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy (Health Disparities), NEOMED College of Pharmacy (Media), and the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy (Creative Inter-Professional Event).

“The numbers are sobering,” said NCPA CEO B. Douglas Hoey, RPh, MBA, “According to NCPA’s [National Adherence Survey](#), three out of four patients indicate they have trouble managing their chronic medication prescriptions. Focusing on the next generation of health care professionals and the solutions they can bring to the table can help achieve a more adherent future. *Script Your Future* could easily become the catalyst that ignites a revolution in more effective medication adherence. Congratulations to the award winners.”

For this year’s Challenge, hundreds of future health care professionals held more than 400 events in 21 states, counseled more than 17,000 patients, and reached more than 5 million consumers nationwide.

“In order for patients to achieve optimal health outcomes, it is essential that they take their medication as directed,” said AMA President Robert M. Wah, M.D. “By educating patients through community outreach and improving the conversations happening in doctors’ offices across the country, we can help patients avoid adverse drug reactions and unnecessary hospitalizations as well as reduce health care costs. The *Script Your Future* challenge offers health care professionals-in-training the opportunity to develop innovative solutions for tackling this important public health challenge and improve public health.”

“The Medication Adherence Team Challenge inspires students to develop efforts to boost medication adherence within their communities,” said NACDS Foundation

President Kathleen Jaeger. “This year's Challenge participants demonstrated the tremendous power that health care professionals can have advancing patient care and improving public health through medication adherence. We're very proud to be a part of this Program that fosters education and collaboration among faculty and students, allowing them to work side-by-side to advance the health of their communities.”

“Pharmacists have a unique opportunity, at the medication dispensing stage, to help patients understand the value of their prescription medications, to help alleviate confusion, and to underline the need for adherence, making a real difference in patients' lives. We are excited to be involved in this program and what it means for the future of America's adherence,” said APhA Executive Vice President and CEO Thomas E. Menighan, BSP Pharm, MBA, ScD (Hon), FAPhA.

“All health care professionals have an important role to play in ensuring that patients understand why they must take prescribed medications and what impact this will have on their health,” said AACN CEO Deborah E. Trautman, PhD, RN. “AACN is pleased to join with our colleagues engaged in the *Script Your Future Campaign* to recognize student leaders whose innovative work to promote proper medication adherence will have a lasting impact on enhancing patient safety across care settings.”

The recognized schools' campaigns, selected from dozens of applications and more than 100 participating educational institutions, are listed below.

National Challenge Award: University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy

The University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy partnered with medical, dental, and nursing students to counsel more than 1,100 patients about proper medication adherence both on campus and throughout their county. To achieve this goal, the team created a standardized intervention for patients that could be applied to different health care settings, including community pharmacies, hospitals, and medical clinics. The University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy held a variety of community outreach events and educated patients on the importance of adherence by distributing *Script Your Future* materials, offering on-site blood pressure screenings, and counseling patients who shared drug therapy concerns.

Via social media, the school shared daily tips on improving medication adherence to hundreds of followers. Additionally, the team created a [Public Service Announcement](#), stressing the importance of taking medications as directed and spreading the *Script Your Future* message.

National Challenge Award: University of Maryland School of Pharmacy

The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy partnered with the University Student Government Association, School of Nursing, and School of Social Work, forming a “*Script Your Future* Committee” in order to plan and organize community events. The team held several events, including a health fair, an “NBC Health and Fitness Expo” in

Washington, DC, a “Million Hearts” symposium, an “Inter-professional Education Day,” and several others. Recognizing that patients are often met with an overwhelming amount of information after a hospital visit, the team focused on creating new relationships with local hospitals and were able to distribute hundreds of wallet cards to discharged patients. Through the outstanding efforts of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, more than 1,600 members of the Baltimore City community were informed about the importance of medication adherence.

National Challenge Award: Honorable Mention and Finalists

In addition, the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy earned an Honorable Mention in this category, and the following schools were named Finalists under the National Award category: Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine School of Pharmacy (LECOM), University of California San Francisco School of Pharmacy, University of Washington School of Pharmacy, and Western New England University College of Pharmacy.

FOCUSED AWARDS

Health Disparities, Under-represented Community Outreach Award: University of Charleston School of Pharmacy

The University of Charleston School of Pharmacy targeted underserved, rural communities in West Virginia and Southern Ohio, choosing these communities because of their limited access to health care. The University of Charleston School of Pharmacy partnered with hospitals located within the target population, distributed more than 15,000 flyers, held a small town health fair, where they counseled patients, and appeared on a local talk show to discuss medication adherence.

Communication and Media Outreach Award: Northeast Ohio Medical University College of Pharmacy (NEOMED)

Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) College of Pharmacy and Medicine students and faculty utilized a variety of social media to engage with and educate patients. Along with other forms of public outreach, NEOMED created and uploaded over half a dozen PSAs on YouTube in eight different languages (English, Arabic, French, German, Hindi, Spanish, Mandarin, and Ukrainian), created an interactive Facebook page devoted to the *Script Your Future* campaign, and appeared on a radio talk show to discuss methods to overcoming barriers of medication adherence. Their exceptional media outreach reached more than 1 million people.

Creative Inter-Professional Team Event Award: University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy

In collaboration with the School of Medicine, School of Dental Medicine, and School of Nursing, the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy focused on patient outreach

by creating, “Medication Adherence Weeks” at outpatient pharmacies on the University of Pittsburgh campus. Team members provided patients with blood pressure screenings, medication adherence counseling, and helpful campaign materials, such as wallet cards and pillboxes.

The School of Pharmacy also partnered with a local, underserved, free clinic by providing patients with Spanish versions of campaign materials, and utilizing Spanish-speaking volunteer translators. Nearly 100 University of Pittsburgh volunteers helped patients understand and determine their own health care priorities at the free clinic.

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About *Script Your Future*

Script Your Future, launched in 2011, is a national public awareness campaign about medication adherence coordinated by the National Consumers League (NCL), a private, non-profit membership organization founded in 1899. NCL’s mission is to protect and promote social and economic justice for consumers and workers in the United States and abroad. For more information about the *Script Your Future* campaign, visit www.ScriptYourFuture.org. For more information on NCL, please visit www.nclnet.org.