

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW



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You're seen as an innovator in community pharmacy in British Columbia. Tell us about your professional background.

I started out training to work in the hospital setting. With my undergraduate degree from UBC tucked under my arm, I headed east and became one of only five graduates of a unique residency and masters in clinical pharmacy program at the University of Toronto and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. This was an outstanding opportunity that combined clinical work with research (I had to complete a full thesis) and leadership experience. Along the way I discovered a passion for anticipating the future and bringing change ideas to life. I also realised that I'd rather be where the action is, on the front lines of community practice, and that's where I've spent most of my pharmacy career ever since.

My professional experience includes establishing the first pharmacist home visit program from a community pharmacy in Ottawa; establishing a consulting pharmacist service in psychiatric long term care; project managing health education programs; being a lobbyist; leading the pharmacy innovation portfolio for Canada's largest independent community pharmacy banner; leading a team that built technology enabled clinical pharmacist services; informing government policies on payment for community pharmacy services; and ultimately leading the team that established the first licensed, pharmacist led patient care clinic at a Canadian university, which is where I am today.

Tell us about your clinic and how it operates.

The UBC Pharmacists Clinic has three

mandates: patient care, education and practice change. Our clinic is where expert pharmacists provide best practice clinical care to several thousand patients each year by appointment on referral from their physician, other healthcare team member, or self referral. Most of these patients are highly complex with multiple health conditions, taking multiple medicines and with confounding issues related to mental health and frailty, to name a few. We work together with patients and their care teams to identify, prioritise and solve medicines therapy problems.

We provide learning experiences for student pharmacists to prepare them for real-world practice. We have students involved in project work, wellness programs, patient care cases, health informatics initiatives, outreach presentations and practice research so they learn a variety of skills they will need in modern practice.

Perhaps the greatest area of effort for our clinic is as a 'living lab' where we figure out, develop and test systems and processes that help pharmacists practise to their full scope and prepare for future scope. We build training programs, documentation systems, service models, quality assurance programs, administrative support systems and patient centred care approaches to catalyse pharmacist practice change. Our goal is to respectfully support our pharmacist colleagues as our profession moves towards the tipping point where clinical, patient focused practice is usual pharmacist care.

Our clinic is funded in part by the provincial Ministry of Health, the university and other public

organisations that want pharmacists to practise to their full scope for the benefit of society. Our clinic is not for profit and patients don't pay to receive services. All the materials we develop at the clinic are freely available to any pharmacist or pharmacy wanting to enhance their patient care practice.

Your presentation at APP in March will be about the pharmacist's clinical process that they should be implementing. Please provide us a sneak peek into some of the issues you will be covering.

Most pharmacists have a built-in process for filling prescriptions or completing other routine functions in their daily work. Few pharmacists currently have a built-in clinical process to care for the people who use medicines. A shift in thinking and doing our work is necessary for the pieces to fall into place around full-scope practice, payment for clinical services and pharmacist professional satisfaction. At the APP, I will demystify the pharmacist's clinical process and share practical strategies so pharmacists can identify, establish and integrate their own clinical process into their workplace.

What final message would you like to give pharmacists in Australia?

Chances are that pharmacists attending the APP are extremely smart people who went into pharmacy to care for people. I plan to help my pharmacist colleagues focus, apply, and perhaps rekindle in some cases, their passion for our profession by seeing the opportunities available to us during this time of transition.