

Ohio Northern Students "Bridge" Resource Gap

Before you toss any old textbooks and reference books, consider donating them through Pharmabridge, an international pharmacist-to-pharmacist project that matches up pharmacists in developing countries with pharmacists in developed countries. Better yet, involve your students in a Pharmabridge project.

Lee Savino, Pharm.D., professor of Clinical Pharmacy, Ohio Northern University College of Pharmacy, is the faculty advisor to an independent study course that is organized around participation in Pharmabridge.

Each quarter, 15 to 20 students take the course. Some students have taken the course every quarter since it was first offered last fall. The students pick sites to work with after reviewing a list of pharmacists from various countries who have filled out applications with Pharmabridge. In the applications, pharmacists from developing countries describe the type of aid they are seeking for their libraries, drug information centers, pharmacies or clinics.

After Savino suggested to students that they consider targeting those with the greatest needs first, most correspondence has been through the mail. It can take as long as three months to receive a reply.

In the past year, Ohio Northern pharmacy students have sent boxes of reference books and other materials to Nigeria, Guyana, Ethiopia, Zambia, Jamaica, Russia, and India. These sites will be sent materials again this year. Students enrolled this year have selected a site in Nepal as well. "There is such a need in these countries for references that would otherwise be thrown away," Savino explained. In addition to reference books, donations have also included journals and computers. Old issues of journals are sent one year at a time.

What's more, some students are considering doing clinical rotations at these sites where they have gotten to know the pharmacists.

Most of the donated materials have been

supplied by Ohio pharmacists. Savino sent a letter last year to all pharmacists licensed in Ohio asking them to save old reference editions, old journals and computers they no longer need because they've upgraded their systems. "We've had an enormous response from the Ohio pharmacists and they are still sending us stuff." Typically the references and texts received are just one edition old. The computers need to be capable of running Windows 98.

"Interacting with these pharmacists from developing countries is a real eye opener for the students," said Savino. "Our students are used to having every reference available to them either online or in print. The response letters we get are so thankful."

One pharmacist from Ethiopia wrote, "The publications will transform me as a pharmacist. These are publications which I always wanted to have. It is a dream come true."

Some of the first students to work on the Pharmabridge project who will begin their clinical rotations next year are considering Pharmabridge sites. For two students who spent the summer in Guyana and visited a clinic before they signed up for the independent study course, their rotation will be a return trip. "They picked the pharmacist they had met in Guyana for the Pharmabridge project," explained Savino. "Having been to the clinic they also knew what was needed, which was basically everything. This pharmacist saw patients and dispensed medications but didn't have any references to look up dosing, etc. We sent a box of references to start a basic library, with books on therapeutics, pharmacology, pharmacy calculations, and medicinal chemistry."

Another student who signed up for the first time this quarter has a dual pharmacy/Spanish major. "This student wants to select a Spanish speaking country and after developing a relationship with the pharmacists at a site, she would like to take one of her clerkships there," said Savino.

Reaching Out With Pharmabridge

Pharmabridge is a private pharmacist to pharmacist initiative supported by the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and the Common Wealth Pharmaceutical Association (CPA). More information is available at: www.fip.org, then click on "activities." Pharmabridge is coordinated by Agathe Wehrli of Switzerland who can be reached at: wehrlia@bluewin.ch. Currently, according to Wehrli, the requests from pharmacists in developing countries "far outnumber" the offers from pharmacists in developed countries.

Prepharmacy students enrolled in Ohio Northern's 0-6 year program also have an opportunity to participate in the Pharmabridge project. To help keep costs down, first and second year students pick up books and computers from pharmacists in their hometowns when they visit for breaks or weekends and receive credit toward a community service requirement.

The project has also received some monetary donations from Ohio pharmacists "though we didn't ask for any," noted Savino. These funds are used to cover shipping costs to sites in developing countries and to buy computer parts that may be needed to repair donated computers. Because this is an independent study course, the university also contributes to the shipping costs.

Savino said she encourages other pharmacy schools to get involved with Pharmabridge. "The project needs a faculty advisor to act as a coordinator and central collection point but it doesn't take much time or effort for the rewards that you get. The pharmacists who receive these books are so grateful."

NAPLEX Testing Fees Raised

Testing fees for candidates taking the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination (NAPLEX) will increase by \$70, effective January 1, 2003. Fees are also being raised for the

Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination (MPJE).

The total NAPLEX registration fee will increase from \$360 to \$430, according to the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), reflecting an increase from \$250 to \$300 in the base fee, and an increase in the vendor administrative fee from \$110 to \$130.

The total MPJE registration fee will increase from \$130 to \$170, with the base fee increasing from \$85 to \$110, and the vendor administrative fee increasing from \$45 to \$60.

"It is anticipated that these fees will remain in effect through December 2004," said NABP.

The base fee, which is managed by NABP, covers costs of exam development and applications, and NABP member services such as meetings and publications. The vendor administration fee relates to costs of exam delivery, such as the use of testing facilities. NABP's exam administrator is Chauncey Group International.

The vendor administration fee was last increased in 2001. NABP's base fee was last increased in 1996.