

Community Pharmacist

Chain Community Pharmacy

Ask a chain community pharmacist what he or she likes most about their job, and you're likely to hear, "it's all about people." From helping with aches and pains, to educating patients about sophisticated drug therapies, to helping sick patients cope with their feelings... pharmacists forge relationships with their patients. For more than 22 years, pharmacists have ranked at or near the top of the Gallup Poll ranking of the "most trusted professionals." For many Americans, their pharmacist is their primary source of health information – the health care professional who is readily accessible and easily approachable. The pharmacy is often the first place patients go for questions about medicine and their health.

If you're a "people person" with strong interpersonal and verbal communication skills, chain community pharmacy may be for you. It's a fast-paced environment, requiring intense focus, organization, and efficiency. The ability to communicate on many levels is key: scientifically with health professionals and simply for patients. As the field of pharmacy evolves and pharmacists play a more active role in counseling and medications therapy, chain community pharmacists will enjoy even more prestige, financial rewards and respect. Starting salaries are as high as \$100,000-\$120,000 a year, with potential for growth.

Patient Care Opportunities

While some chain community pharmacists are content with the traditional role of dispensing medication and educating patients, others choose more. Today, thousands of chain community pharmacists are certified to vaccinate patients against influenza and pneumonia and many are also earning nationally-recognized credentials in pharmacy disease state management in areas covering diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and anticoagulation therapy. They also have many other patient care opportunities, including smoking cessation programs, compounding specialties, herbal and other alternative drug therapies, and screening programs such as those to detect osteoporosis and high cholesterol. Pharmacists are helping patients take a more active role in their health.

Opportunities Beyond the Counter... Management in Chain Pharmacy

A career in chain pharmacy can lead to a challenging management position for those interested in combining their pharmacy expertise with business skills. Many chains offer career paths that take pharmacists from the store level to regional, district, and corporate level positions. Pharmacists occupy positions in the development of patient care programs, pharmacist recruiting, pharmacist and technician training, pharmacy operations, pharmaceutical buying, professional and legal affairs, and other varying levels of management.

Independent Community Pharmacy

Independent community pharmacists are easily accessible health care providers specializing in high quality patient-centered care, that are at the heart and soul of many communities. Independent pharmacists continue to be vital health care providers to patients, and dynamic leaders in communities of all sizes, including key locations in rural and underserved areas. Independent pharmacies also offer cutting-edge and innovative patient care services that often times aren't feasible or practical in other pharmacy settings. The top services offered in independent pharmacies in 2013 were: delivery (79%), adherence/medication synchronization programs (67%), compounding (65%), durable medical goods (64%), and immunizations (62%).

Why do pharmacists want to own a pharmacy?

According to one pharmacy owner, "The best perk of ownership to me is that I can change the way I do things when and however I want to". Independent pharmacy owners have the advantage of a flexible management structure, experience higher job and patient satisfaction, and have control over their own financial destiny and hours worked.

What is the difference between an independent community pharmacy and a chain pharmacy?

Independent community pharmacies are pharmacist-owned and privately held. The many looks of independent pharmacy ownership include single store ownership, multi-store privately traded ownership (over 25% of independent owners have ownership in two or more pharmacies), franchise pharmacies, independently owned supermarket pharmacies, and specialty pharmacies. Whether they own one pharmacy, three pharmacies, or ten pharmacies independent community pharmacists are personally invested in the neighborhoods they serve.

Are there any independent pharmacies out there?

In 2013, there were approximately 22,814 independently owned pharmacies which dispensed 1.42 billion prescriptions annually. There are states like Oklahoma where there are 2.5 independent pharmacies for every one chain pharmacy, or Wyoming where there are 2.4 independent pharmacies per every one chain pharmacy.

Is there any opportunity for me to own a pharmacy?

There are various ways to get into pharmacy ownership. Junior partnerships and Community Pharmacy Residency programs also offer ways for students to first learn the pharmacy business and gradually take over ownership responsibilities. Buying a pharmacy outright is another option for students and pharmacists interested in ownership. Additionally, there are many resources available to those who would like to start a pharmacy from the ground up, particularly in areas that are not currently being served by a community pharmacist.

Adapted from www.accp.org