

Pharmacy Ambassadors Program



**THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY



Program Overview

Pharmacy Ambassadors is a collaboration between The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy, a national grocery store chain pharmacy and a refugee resettlement agency. Its mission is to provide interactive educational sessions that introduce newly resettled refugees in Columbus to U.S. healthcare and pharmacy systems.

Each 2-hour workshop provides information on:

- services available from community pharmacies
- differences between over-the-counter and prescription medications
- how to obtain a prescription, and how to read a prescription label
- how to order refills and how chronic medicines differ from acute medicines
- how to open different kinds of medication bottles and vials
- how to pick up medication from the pharmacy

Each session includes a tour of an over-the-counter product aisle, allowing time for questions.

How does the program work?

- Student pharmacists organize and arrange monthly educational sessions.
- The partnering pharmacy provides mentorship for students and a venue for the program.
- The partnering community resettlement organization identifies and recruits refugee participants.

The strong relationship that has been established between the university and community partners to support the program is a cornerstone of the sustainability of the program.

Program Highlights

The Pharmacy Ambassadors Program

- improves healthcare literacy among underserved populations by orienting them to and guiding them through the medication-use process.
- increases public knowledge of the U.S. medication-use system and provides education on availability and access to pharmacy services in the community.
- introduces the need for cultural sensitivity to the participating students, pharmacists, staff, and faculty at the college and in the communities.
- serves as a collaborative learning experience that strengthens the college's relationships within the community.

Stories about the program and its impact have been published in print and aired on a public media.:

The Columbus Dispatch
go.osu.edu/dispatcharticle

Public Radio International (PRI)
go.osu.edu/PRIarticle

Pharmacy Today, The American
Pharmacists Association (APhA)
go.osu.edu/pharmacytoday

Impact of the program

Participants of the program feel comfortable coming to the pharmacy and asking questions of the pharmacist and pharmacy staff after attending. More are comfortable with their knowledge of the U.S. healthcare system. The majority of participants find the presentation helpful, and they would recommend the presentation to other community members.



Participant testimony

What refugee resettlement staff say

“People don’t understand it’s a completely different system . . . It’s complicated and stressful for people who haven’t been through this before. It’s a new thing for them.”

“I think the training just empowers them. They gain more confidence to go to their pharmacy and ask for their prescription.”

What students say

“...it reinforced what values we already have/are taught in pharmacy school. It was neat to be at the forefront of actually being able to apply concepts of ‘don’t be judgmental,’ things that they teach us in pharmacy. Here we are, doing one of these sessions. I see it right in front of me. It reinforced my values.”

“This experience, this training that we’ve done through this, has really made me feel more sensitive toward (different) cultures, which is why I wish at least some of our classmates would be able to do it once.”

What participants say

“Working with the students was good. [I felt] good because [the program provided an] opportunity to learn whatever [I] did not know before [from the student pharmacists]. Working with the students was good.”

“The concept of refill, [I] never knew it before, but after attending the presentation, [I learned] you can just go back to the pharmacy and [ask for] the same drug [if you have refills on your prescription].”

“[I am] very happy about the whole presentation... it was helpful for [me because I] understood the process of using [a] pharmacy [in the U.S.]. [I am] also happy [to be able to] help somebody else who is in need.”



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Learn More

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