VIEWPOINTS

The Class of 2015
Lucinda L. Maine, PhD
Executive Vice President, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

There must be a typo in this title. It is the Class of 2005 that has now turned the tassel from right to left, thrown off their academic regalia, and embarked upon careers in pharmacy in one of the many places PharmD graduates find positions. This is, after all, the best-educated group of pharmacists ever to enter the profession as all have completed their degree under the Standards 2000 accreditation standards and guidelines. One can only imagine what exciting careers await these medication-use specialists.

It is the Class of 2015 that merits consideration today. It is hard to realize that a student graduating this June from any high school in America who follows the path that many of our current students follow, that is, 4 years of undergraduate education and 4 years of professional education, followed by a first and possibly second year of residency training, will complete her training in 2015! What will the profession she enters look like?

The Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners (JCPP) has articulated a future vision for pharmacy and how it will be practiced in 2015 (Appendix 1). Equally important, the document describes how pharmacy practice will benefit society.

The JCPP was established in 1977 and serves as a forum for discussion of important issues and priorities of the pharmacy profession. The chief elected officers and chief executive officers of national pharmacy organizations meet quarterly for a full day’s discussion and also form working groups of association staff members to work jointly on priority projects.

The profession of pharmacy, in large measure because of the collaboration made possible by JCPP, has an enviable record of planning strategically to determine how individual pharmacists and those organizations that educate, employ, and support them can best use their resources to address societal needs. Beginning in 1984, and continuing at 5-year intervals through the present day, leaders in pharmacy have embarked on strategic planning efforts. The current effort began in late 2003 and culminated in all JCPP member organizations endorsing the 2015 vision by late 2004.

The hand of pharmacy education was firmly on the steering wheel in the development of the draft vision, which was developing on a parallel track to the 2004 CAPE outcome statements for pharmacy education. Pharmacists of the future must be responsible for:

- rational use of medications, including the measurement and assurance of medication therapy outcomes
- promotion of wellness, health improvement, and disease prevention
- design and oversight of safe, accurate, and timely medication distribution systems

In the course of the discussions around the JCPP table, some made the somewhat cynical observation that the 2015 vision that pharmacists will be the health care professionals responsible for providing patient care that ensures optimal medication therapy outcomes is strikingly similar to the vision for pharmacy articulated after the 1989 JCPP Pharmacy in the 21st Century conference. While progress has been made, many are not satisfied with the level of professional responsibility generally assigned to or accepted by pharmacists today for ensuring that patients achieve the intended outcomes from acute and chronic drug therapy.

Interestingly, the response from the practitioner organizations is that they believe we have made substantial progress toward this vision. To make their case, they pointed specifically to the quality and capabilities of our 21st century PharmD graduates and how much more prepared they are to deliver medication therapy management.

So what preparation does the 2015 graduate need to continue driving us toward our collective vision for what the profession offers society? Evidence at the 2005 AACP Institute suggests that many schools have asked their curriculum committees to seriously address this question to ensure that we do not rest too comfortably on the turn of the century curricula we have now fully implemented.

JCPP says that society should depend on pharmacists for the following:

- medication therapy management is readily available to all patients
- desired patient outcomes are more frequently achieved
- overuse, underuse, and misuse of medications are minimized
- medication-related public health goals are more effectively achieved
cost-effectiveness of medication therapy is optimized

What are the pharmaceutical, biomedical, clinical, and applied science competencies and clinical skills that our 2015 graduates need in order to deliver on this promise? This is exactly the question the 2005-2006 AACP standing committees have been charged to answer from a variety of vantage points. We welcome the thoughts and contributions of all AACP members as the committees begin their work this fall.

Appendix 1. Future Vision of Pharmacy Practice stated by the Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners in November 2004

Future Vision of Pharmacy Practice
Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners
November 10, 2004

Vision Statement
Pharmacists will be the health care professionals responsible for providing patient care that ensures optimal medication therapy outcomes.

Pharmacy Practice in 2015
The Foundations of Pharmacy Practice. Pharmacy education will prepare pharmacists to provide patient-centered and population-based care that optimizes medication therapy; to manage health care system resources to improve therapeutic outcomes; and to promote health improvement, wellness, and disease prevention. Pharmacists will develop and maintain:
- a commitment to care for, and care about, patients
- an in-depth knowledge of medications, and the biomedical, sociobehavioral, and clinical sciences
- the ability to apply evidence-based therapeutic principles and guidelines, evolving sciences and emerging technologies, and relevant legal, ethical, social, cultural, economic, and professional issues to contemporary pharmacy practice.

How Pharmacists Will Practice. Pharmacists will have the authority and autonomy to manage medication therapy and will be accountable for patients’ therapeutic outcomes. In doing so, they will communicate and collaborate with patients, care givers, health care professionals, and qualified support personnel. As experts regarding medication use, pharmacists will be responsible for:
- rational use of medications, including the measurement and assurance of medication therapy outcomes
- promotion of wellness, health improvement, and disease prevention
- design and oversight of safe, accurate, and timely medication distribution systems.

Working cooperatively with practitioners of other disciplines to care for patients, pharmacists will be:
- the most trusted and accessible source of medications, and related devices and supplies
- the primary resource for unbiased information and advice regarding the safe, appropriate, and cost-effective use of medications
- valued patient care providers whom health care systems and payers recognize as having responsibility for assuring the desired outcomes of medication use.

How Pharmacy Practice Will Benefit Society. Pharmacists will achieve public recognition that they are essential to the provision of effective health care by ensuring that:
- medication therapy management is readily available to all patients
- desired patient outcomes are more frequently achieved
- overuse, underuse and misuse of medications are minimized
- medication-related public health goals are more effectively achieved
- cost-effectiveness of medication therapy is optimized.