

**APhA CAREER  
PATHWAY  
EVALUATION  
PROGRAM<sup>®</sup>**

*for Pharmacy Professionals*

**BRIEFING DOCUMENT**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Please complete the exercises in this Briefing Document before attending the live workshop. The assignment should require less than an hour of your time, but it is critical to the success of the workshop. **Please be sure to bring this document with you.** Thank you.



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6th Edition

## **Introduction**

The ongoing revolution in the delivery of health care creates unprecedented challenges for the profession of pharmacy. Today's pharmacists need to be technically competent as well as caring professionals capable of effectively monitoring and providing cognitive services for many therapeutic health parameters. The exciting part of all of this is that you, as a pharmacist, have great opportunities to develop and practice your skills for the benefit of the patient in more ways than ever before.

Individuals who carefully plan their career strategies will do well against tough competition in employment markets and will achieve greater personal and professional satisfaction with their career selections.

Many student pharmacists graduate with exposure to very few of the career options available to them. To make a sound career decision, you need knowledge about two important subjects: the pharmacy profession and you. After working through the exercises in this document and participating in the workshop of the *American Pharmacists Association (APhA) Career Pathway Evaluation Program for Pharmacy Professionals*, you will not only have detailed and useful information on many areas of pharmacy in which to practice, but also have a clearer understanding of how to choose a career path in pharmacy that is appropriate for you.

## **The Program**

The *APhA Career Pathway Evaluation Program for Pharmacy Professionals* was originally developed by Glaxo Inc. (currently GSK), a major U.S. pharmaceutical company, as part of its continuing commitment to health care education. In the year 2000, APhA acquired the program to enable continued access for the pharmacy profession. In 2007, APhA contracted with several research scientists to update the program's research. The program itself has a self-directed portion and a portion conducted in a live, interactive format.

The program consists of three key components:

- Self-assessment exercises (two of which have been programmed to be interactive via the Internet at [www.pharmacist.com/careers.cfm](http://www.pharmacist.com/careers.cfm)).
- A workshop that focuses on a five-step decision-making process.
- Resources materials and follow-up counseling.

## **What's in It for You?**

The purpose of the *APhA Career Pathway Evaluation Program* is to provide you with a process and resources for making informed career decisions. The program provides information and guidelines you will need to carry out this process. It is not a “quick fix” that will enable you to reach a career decision by the end of the workshop nor is it a substitute for your own research. However, it can help you identify a pharmacy career option that is appropriate for you.

## **The Briefing Document Assignment**

This Briefing Document contains some basic concepts and exercises that will prepare you for the workshop. The exercises should require less than an hour of your time, and will give you a good start on a decision-making process that should prove very helpful.

There are no right or wrong answers to these exercises. If you are planning to participate in a live workshop, please bring this document with you. The rating and ranking of critical factors in Exercises 5 and 6 also can be done online at [www.pharmacist.com/careers.cfm](http://www.pharmacist.com/careers.cfm).

If you chose to do these exercises online, please print out your results and bring them with you to the workshop.

## **Decision-Making Model**

The basic decision-making model outlined on the following page provides the framework for the *APhA Career Pathway Evaluation Program*. The model shows what steps are needed to be a *vigilant* decision maker. The vigilant decision maker is alert, thorough, open, and persistent in looking at and evaluating different possibilities.

Please study the model and the explanatory paragraphs about the model on the following pages:

### **The Vigilant Decision-Making Process**

#### **Step I. Appraising the Challenge**

- Determine the importance of informed decision making.
- Acknowledge the consequences of making a “passive decision.”

#### **Step II. Assessing Yourself**

- Conduct a thorough self-analysis; assess your goals, values, strengths, skills, interests, and preferences.

#### **Step III. Surveying Alternatives**

- Explore a wide range of alternatives.

#### **Step IV. Evaluating Alternatives**

- Search for new information.
- Take account of new information, even if it does not support the course of action you initially preferred.
- Match your self-assessment with career options.
- Consider both positive and negative consequences of all alternatives.

#### **Step V. Achieving Commitment**

- Decide the best course of action, including a contingency plan in case your first choice doesn't work out.

## **The Vigilant Decision-Making Process**

### **Step I. Appraising the Challenge**

Your first step is to recognize the importance of taking an active role in making career decisions, rather than just assuming things will work out. You also should recognize the difficulty of thoughtful career decision making, including the amount of time needed to do it well. Problems occur when you underestimate the demands of the task or postpone tackling it out of reluctance to look at the issues involved.

### **Step II. Assessing Yourself**

Good career decisions require an unusual degree of self-knowledge. For many people, self-examination is the hardest part of the decision-making task. But you must understand what your goals, values, strengths, interests, and abilities are if you are going to make the career decision that is right for you.

### **Step III. Surveying Alternatives**

Because there are a lot of career paths to choose from, you may be tempted to rule out options right from the start. You may feel you don't have the time, energy, or resources to review them all, or you may feel you already know what you want to do. But you might overlook an exciting possibility if you aren't sufficiently active and open at this step.

### **Step IV. Evaluating Alternatives**

In many ways, this is the heart of the matter: matching your preferences and priorities to the options attractive to you. The challenge is to remain open and objective even when what you discover about a given career—or about yourself—runs counter to your expectations. This part of the decision-making process requires an ongoing effort—you may well have revisit steps II and III.

### **Step V. Achieving Commitment**

After all the relevant factors have been identified, explored, and weighed, you must reach a conclusion. Part of the challenge of this stage is that you must use both intuitive as well as analytic thought.

**Exercise 1: What Led You to Pharmacy?**

In the space below, indicate your professional and/or personal goals, interests, and other factors that led you to the profession of pharmacy.

**Goals:** *(what the profession of pharmacy will enable you to accomplish—personally and professionally)*

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**Interests:** *(what personally attracted you to the profession of pharmacy)*

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**Other Factors:** *(any other factors that led you to the profession of pharmacy)*

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## **Exercise 2: What Are Your Career Options?**

Use the Career Options Chart on pages BD-8 and BD-9 to orient your thinking about career options for you. The chart is designed to depict the major categories and environments with a reasonable level of detail.

Where the same career option exists in more than one environment (e.g., pediatrics), it is repeated on the chart. In other instances, where an option more typically pertains to one environment (e.g., nuclear pharmacy), it has been listed in the area where it is usually found.

**Instructions:** When you have reviewed the Career Options Chart, list the options in one of the following three columns on page BD-10:

**Understand**—Career options you know enough about to either consider or reject as possible career options for you. Consider how much of the daily routine you actually know.

**Aware**—Career options you may be aware of superficially, but know too little about to reject or consider as career options.

**New Options**—Career options that have been introduced to you on the chart.

## CAREER OPTIONS FOR PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS

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### ACADEMIA

Administration

Biological Sciences

Clinical\*

Continuing Education

Experiential Education

Medicinal Chemistry

Pharmaceutics

Pharmacognosy

Pharmacology

Pharmacy Administration

Pharmacy Practice

*Traditional careers in academia include schools of pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, allied or public health*

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### COMMUNITY

#### Chain

Clinical\*

Franchise

Home Health Care

Long-Term Care

Corporate Management

#### Group/HMO

Clinical\*

#### Independent

Clinical\*

Franchise

Home Health Care

Long-Term Care

Medical Group Affiliate

Office-Based Practice

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### CONSULTING

Clinical\*

Home Health Care

Hospice

Hospital

Clinical\*

Long-Term Care

Medicaid Pharmacy Consultant

Managed Care

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### INDUSTRY

#### Administration

Continuing Education

Professional Relations

Project Management

#### Business

Management

Marketing

Sales

#### Research and Development

Administration

Basic Research

Biological Sciences

Clinical\*

Clinical Research

Medicinal Chemistry

Pharmaceutics

Pharmacognosy

Pharmacology

Pharmacy Administration

Pharmacy Practice

#### Technical/Scientific

Drug Information

Manufacturing

Medical Science Liaison (RMS/MSL)

Postmarketing Surveillance

Product Control Quality

Regulatory Affairs

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**INSTITUTION****Hospital (Government, University, or Community)**

Administration  
Clinical\*  
Distribution and Control

Nuclear  
Outpatient/Ambulatory  
**Long-Term Care**  
**Medical/Dental**

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**REGULATORY****Federal**

Bureau of Prisons  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)  
Clinical\*  
Department of Defense (Armed Services)  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
Food and Drug Administration  
Health Resources and Services Administration

Indian Health Service  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
U.S. Coast Guard  
U.S. Public Health Service

**State**

Board of Pharmacy  
Clinical\*  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
Department of Health  
Medicaid Services

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**OTHER**

**Computer Technology**  
**Accreditation Surveyors (ACPE, JCAHO)**  
**Legal**  
**Mail Order**  
**Pharmacy Associations**  
**Specialty Pharmacy**

**Third-Party Insurance/Pharmacy**  
**Benefits Management**  
**Professional Publications**  
**U.S. Pharmacopeia**  
**Veterinary**  
**Wholesale Services**

**\*Clinical includes the following:**

Adult Medicine  
Ambulatory  
Critical Care  
Drug Information  
Emergency Room  
Geriatrics  
Immunization Services  
Infectious Diseases  
Internal Medicine

Intravenous Drug Therapy  
Medical Oncology  
Nutrition  
Pain Management  
Pediatrics  
Pharmacokinetics  
Poison Control  
Psychiatric



**Exercise 3: Status of Your Decision**

What steps have you taken toward choosing a career option within the pharmacy profession or in changing your career path? Perhaps you have spent time and effort investigating different kinds of opportunities. Or maybe you have not begun to look into different options, or have only some vague hunches.

**Instructions:** In the spaces below, answer each of the following questions.

What steps have you taken so far in investigating possible career options?

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What pharmacy career options do you think are most likely for you? (Note: You may wish to refer to the list of options on the Career Options Chart on pages BD-8 & BD-9.)

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#### Exercise 4: Decision-Making Style

A significant aspect of self-knowledge is to recognize that each of us tends to use a particular decision-making style: analytical (thinker), emotional (feeler), or action oriented (doer). It will be helpful for you to become more aware of your own decision-making style and the possible effects of different styles.

**Thinkers** are primarily analytical. They use an objective approach to decision making and run the risks of ignoring their feelings and over-analyzing an issue rather than acting.

**Feelers** primarily rely on their emotions in making decisions. They use a more subjective approach to decision making and run the risk of ignoring the importance of rational evidence.

**Doers** are driven by the need to act. While they are not encumbered with over-analyzing a decision, they may ignore both considered analysis and emotional input in order to take action swiftly.

**Instructions:** Think of an important personal decision you have made (e.g., what pharmacy school to attend, where to live while attending school, your first job) and remind yourself of *how* you reached this decision. Write a brief description of the way you went about making this decision—not its outcome. Decide if thinking, feeling, doing, or a combination guided you in your decision.

You might want to discuss your answer with someone who knows you well. See if he or she agrees with your assessment of yourself as primarily a thinker, feeler, or doer.



















<b>Priority Weighting</b>	<b>Critical Factors</b>
	Interaction With Patients
	Conducting Physical Assessments
	Interpreting Laboratory Values
	Continuity of Relationships
	Helping People
	Collaboration With Other Professionals
	Educating Other Professionals
	Variety of Daily Activities
	Multiple Task Handling
	Problem Solving
	Focus on Expertise
	Innovative Thinking
	Applying Scientific Knowledge
	Applying Medical Knowledge
	Creating New Knowledge by Conducting Research
	Management/Supervision of Others
	Management/Supervision of a Business
	Pressure/Stress
	Work Schedule
	Part-Time Opportunities
	Job-Sharing Opportunities
	Exit/Re-entry Opportunities
	Parental Leave Opportunities
	Leisure/Family Time
	Job Security
	Opportunities for Advancement
	Opportunities for Leadership Development
	Community Prestige
	Professional Involvement
	Income
	Benefits (vacation, health, retirement)
	Geographic Location
	Autonomy
	Self-Worth
	Future Focus
	Professional Prestige
	Unique Practice Environment
	Advanced Degree
	Entrepreneurial Opportunity
	Additional Training
	Interaction With Colleagues
	Travel
	Writing
	Working With Teams
	“On Call”
	Work on Holidays
	Work on Weekends
	Presentations

