

THE SCRIPT

MCW SCHOOL OF PHARMACY OFFICE OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION PRECEPTOR NEWSLETTER



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Preceptor Spotlight- Fitchburg Family Pharmacy



PY1 student pharmacist, Stephan Noonan, completed a Community IPPE rotation at Fitchburg Family Pharmacy, an independent practice that integrates traditional dispensing services with an on-site clinical care model. Stephan interviewed owner Thad Schumacher to learn more about the vision, challenges, and opportunities in building a community pharmacy and patient care clinic. Thad shares insights on innovative practice models, expanding the pharmacist role, and preparing student pharmacists for the future of community-based care.

What inspired the creation of Fitchburg Family Pharmacy?

My entrepreneurial foundation began long before pharmacy school, growing up in a family that owned a car dealership, garage, and autobody shop. During my training, I recognized that independent practice offered something powerful, the ability to make clinical decisions without restriction and to serve patients on my own terms. In residency, I often felt limited in how far I could go to help those in need. Opening Fitchburg Family Pharmacy was the answer. While some pharmacists prefer the structure of chain practice, I sought autonomy, clinical freedom, and the ability to serve as a true point of care for the Fitchburg community. What began as professional independence has grown into a sustained mission to expand access, improve affordability, and elevate patient outcomes.

How does Fitchburg Family Pharmacy ensure students gain meaningful experiences during their rotation?

Although my administrative responsibilities have shifted me away from daily precepting, I remain deeply committed to student development. By entrusting Dr. Bellissimo with full precepting autonomy, I ensure students are immersed in meaningful clinical care rather than limited to dispensing tasks. Learners participate in treatment decisions, practice at the top of their license, and engage directly with patients. Our model prioritizes responsibility, clinical reasoning, and real-world impact, giving students a clear vision of what community pharmacy can become.

What do the pharmacists hope students take away from their experience at Fitchburg Family Pharmacy?

I want students to expand their vision of pharmacy practice. Fitchburg Family Pharmacy was built as a site where pharmacists practice fully, break down access barriers, and create a more just and equitable model of care. With pharmacists now recognized as Medicaid providers and the profession pushing toward broader provider status, I challenge learners to think beyond speed or metrics. It is not about how quickly we complete tasks; it is about how meaningfully we impact patients.

I encourage students to see opportunities within the complexity of modern healthcare. Chaos defines the healthcare marketplace. There are a lot of medications available, but no one knows where things are headed. Insurance dictates healthcare, but within the uncertainty lies opportunity. Where can pharmacists step in to help find solutions? If we are creating solutions, no one is going to tell us to stop.

This philosophy drives my advocacy for PBM reform, affordable medications, and a combined community-based primary care pharmacy model that maximizes patient impact at every encounter.

What should colleagues and fellow preceptors understand about this Community Practice Pharmacy model?

I believe pharmacy must continually evolve. As provider recognition expands, pharmacists must educate patients about the full scope of services they can deliver. Too often, students view pharmacy services narrowly. At Fitchburg Family Pharmacy, we demonstrate a broader model that includes chronic disease management, wound care, blood pressure management, and longitudinal patient care. I encourage fellow preceptors to model this expanded scope and empower students to step confidently into provider roles. By demonstrating value and measurable impact, pharmacy will continue to strengthen its place within the healthcare system.

Fitchburg Family Pharmacy stands as proof that community pharmacy can function as an accessible primary care extension, advocating for affordability, challenging systemic barriers, and serving as a dependable point of care for those who need it most.

Featured Publication: Precepting a Learner with Mental Health Needs

We are proud to share that **Dr. Stacy Reid, PharmD, BCPS, Assistant Dean of Experiential Education**, has published an article in the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy* (AJHP) on the important topic of precepting learners with mental health needs.

Readers with an AJHP subscription may access the full article at the link below. Those without a subscription can view a limited extract at the same link. A full copy of the article is also available upon request by contacting the Office of Experiential Education at pharmacyEE@mcw.edu. **Link:** [Precepting a learner with mental health needs](#)

New Content - Preceptor Insights Video: Challenging Learners

Challenges during clinical rotations are a natural part of developing competent clinicians. What matters most is how we respond when challenges arise. Our latest video introduces the **Rotation Performance Action Plan**, a practical, structured tool to help turn difficult moments into meaningful growth for learners. Learn how to approach struggles with clarity, coaching, and accountability.

Watch the video with this link: [Challenging Learners](#) **View all Preceptor Insights Series videos with this link:** [Preceptor Insights Series playlist](#).

Tips for Effective Written Evaluations Webinar

The webinar ***Tips for Effective Written Evaluations*** is now available in CORE ELMS under the **Training Benefits tab**. Watch this 30-minute recording to learn five practical tips for delivering clear, effective written feedback.

Advanced Physical Assessment Certificate Program

The Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) School of Pharmacy hosts an Annual Advanced Physical Assessment Certificate Program at the MCW Milwaukee Campus. Pharmacists, pharmacy residents and other healthcare providers are invited to attend.

Participants will be able to perform and interpret physical assessments while developing patient care plans.

To register and find more information about the 2026 Advanced Physical Assessment Certificate Program utilize this link:

<https://www.mcw.edu/education/pharmacy-school/programs/professional-development-and-continuing-education/advanced-physical-assessment-certificate-program>
