

## Executive Summary

Academic Pharmacy's Role in  
Increasing Knowledge, Access  
to Resources and Evidence to  
Combat the Opioid Epidemic

[www.aacp.org/opioid](http://www.aacp.org/opioid)

## Background

- The opioid epidemic is a significant public health crisis that has affected every community and population in the United States.
- Colleges and schools of pharmacy have to stay current with many aspects of the opioid epidemic (e.g., opioid medications, pain management, practice issues, laws and regulations) to provide complete student pharmacist education and training.
- No unified collection of relevant activities undertaken by academic pharmacy exists.

## Purpose

To inform the pharmacy profession and other stakeholders as to the efforts of colleges and schools of pharmacy to combat the opioid epidemic.

## Methodology

A call was made in July 2018 for all colleges and schools of pharmacy to provide information on all of their opioid-related activities through September 2018.

- Multiple reminders were generated and various communication vehicles were utilized during the survey period.

AACP staff members continuously developed and refined categories and tags as they reviewed submitted activities.

### Category Definitions:

**Advocacy:** a formal action at a local, state, regional, national or international level that involves pharmacist or other healthcare practitioner support or involvement in combating the opioid crisis.

**Education:** a process targeting any group that involves the distribution or acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and/or habits regarding any aspect of the opioid crisis.

**Practice:** an activity that is implemented in a pharmacy practice setting that addresses the opioid crisis on an individual or population-level.

**Research:** a formal investigation into any aspect of the opioid crisis that has an established purpose(s) and/or research question(s).

**Service:** an activity that is initiated or maintained to address the opioid crisis on individuals or communities (includes public outreach and awareness efforts that do not involve education).

- Tags provide additional information regarding the activity.

A group of members from the AACP Substance Use Disorder Special Interest Group assisted staff in developing the categorization methodology, defining categories and tags, and following-up with non-responding colleges and schools.

- These members also reviewed the assigned categories and tags for each activity.
- This group will continue to work with AACP to further utilize and disseminate survey results.

## Results

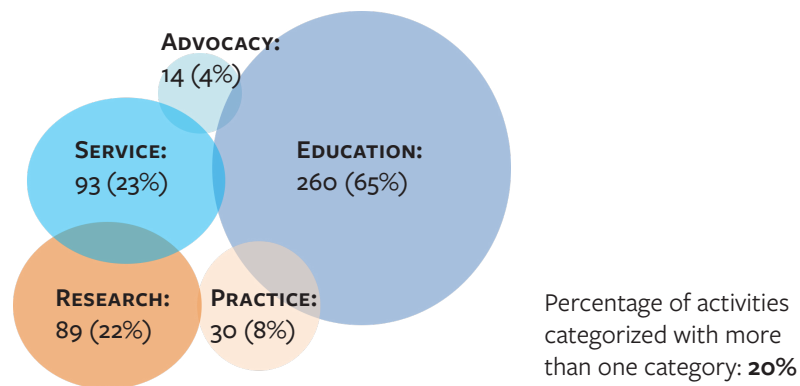
Percentage of schools responding: **104 of 144 schools (72%)**

- Percentage of public vs. private responding: **56% public/44% private**

Number of activities analyzed: **398** (total number of submitted activities: 462)

- Duplicate and non-opioid focused activities were removed.

Percentage of activities categorized as Advocacy, Education, Service, Practice and Research



## Highlights for Each Category

### Advocacy

- State planning to combat the opioid crisis, including prescription drug monitoring programs and harm reduction strategies.
- Position statements on opioid use and pain management.
- State regulations and collaborative practice agreements to support harm reduction practices, including increased access to naloxone and medication-assisted therapy via pharmacist dispensing.

### Education

Target populations include student pharmacists, other health professionals and student health professionals, the public and practicing pharmacists.

- **Student Pharmacists:** Case studies, elective courses, laboratory exercises, lectures, and simulations; enhanced experiential education and patient contact experiences related to opioid pharmacology and dispensing; pain management; opioid alternatives and harm reduction.
- **Interprofessional Education:** Opioid pharmacology and dispensing guidelines, medication safety and prescription monitoring for physicians, dentists and other providers.
- **Practicing Pharmacists:** State-sanctioned continuing professional development programming, academic detailing.
- **Public:** Safe use and disposal of opioids, opioid risk assessment and overdose identification, naloxone use.

## Service

- Establishment of drug take-back programs and drug disposal systems.
- Distribution of naloxone (and how to use it) to the public.

## Practice

- Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and Office-Based Opioid Treatment (OBOT) implementation in primary care settings.
- Utilization of various tools, such as the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), opioid risk assessment tools, and patient Electronic Health Record (EHR), to monitor and respond to opioid use.
- Interprofessional practice models to reduce opioid exposure/misuse.

## Research

- Development of new, non-addicting medications and modalities for pain management.
- Investigations into perceptions of opioid harm reduction strategies and naloxone use.
- Opioid use, opioid use disorder and naloxone prescribing/utilization trends at the local and state level.
- Medication management to reduce opioid misuse and abuse.

## The Role of Student Pharmacists in Combating the Opioid Crisis

- A majority of schools participate in Generation Rx, an organization whose mission is to educate people of all ages, including elementary, middle, high school students, college-age students, and senior citizen groups, about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications. Fifteen institutions reported 24 Generation Rx activities (6% of the total number of activities).
- Student pharmacists are training their peers and members of their community, including first-responders, on how to determine an opioid-use emergency and how to utilize naloxone.

## Collaborations

- Colleges and schools of pharmacy have collaborated with many different types of organizations for funding, products, expertise and services in activities to combat the opioid crisis.
  - Associations, boards of pharmacy, societies, and external institutions
  - Federal, state and local governments
  - Healthcare organizations (ambulatory care, community, health-systems)
  - Health departments
  - For-profit and non-profit organizations

## Conclusions and Next Steps

- Providing a summary of each submitted activity, filterable through various functions (e.g., school, category) on the AACP website.
- Strategic utilization and communication of academic pharmacy activities to inform the Academy, profession, the NAM Action Collaborative on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic, and other strategic engagement efforts.
- Contact colleges and schools of pharmacy each fall for updated opioid-related activities.