

# Preceptor Newsletter

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## How to Handle Snow Days

The winter of 2010-2011 has produced significant snowfall accumulations and led to many missed hours of work and school. A frequent question from preceptors is what to do on days when driving conditions are hazardous. If the Rutgers New Brunswick campus is closed due to weather, students are not required to report to rotation. However, if Rutgers New Brunswick is open and the preceptor feels that road conditions are too dangerous, the preceptor may use their discretion and allow the student to stay home, come in late, or leave early. However, the students must always make up any hours that are missed due to weather. The 200 hours required for the five week rotation are required by the school and are needed for licensure.

The hours missed due to weather conditions may be made up in a variety of ways. If the preceptor prefers, the student may make up the hours by completing extra hours on other days or coming in on a weekend. Please note that plans for

making up hours should be agreed upon by both the student and the preceptor. Another option is to give the students work to do at home during their time away from the site.



Potential homework activities include home-study CE's, written projects, and research. Home-study CE's may be found in a variety of pharmacy publications, as well as on online sources such as Medscape. Written projects such as writing up a journal club for an assigned article can also be valuable in allowing the student to work on their writing skills. Assigning the student drug information questions to research from home can enhance drug literature evaluation skills. Students have access to the Rutgers online library, so as long as they have home internet

access, acquiring journal articles should not be a problem. Another activity which can be useful, particularly during rotations with many missed days due to weather, is assigning students a list of questions to research while doing required reading on a topic. Many times busy rotation sites can get behind in planned discussions with the student, and this can be particularly problematic if days are missed due to weather. Having students research questions that would have been covered during a topic discussion allows the student to learn the topic even when time at the rotation site doesn't permit a one-on-one discussion with the preceptor.

Giving students the opportunity to make up hours missed due to weather by completing extra hours or by completing homework allows the student to make the most of their time at your rotation site. Remember, if you have any questions about rotation hours for students, please contact Donna Feudo.

## Pharmacy Poison Prevention with “Spike the Porcupine”

By Athanasios Athans,  
Pharm.D. Candidate 2011



In the past year, there were 55,764 reports of poison exposure in New Jersey alone, with 50% of these exposures occurring in children younger than six years old. As trusted and respected healthcare professionals, pharmacists can effectively

inform and educate the public about dangers of household poisons. As a readily-available healthcare provider, the pharmacist is often the primary source of patient information regarding poisoning and they can become involved in many outreach programs to educate the pediatric population about poison prevention.

This past December, Athanasios Athans and Capital Health Regional Medical Center Clinical Pharmacists, Mary Bridgeman, Pharm.D., BCPS and Kavitha Dalal, Pharm.D., reached out to the community by teaching five preschool classes at Capital Health’s Children’s Center in Trenton, New Jersey, about poison prevention. To emphasize the significance of poison awareness, this group of pharmacists educated the children of the hospital’s daycare center by incorporating games, songs, and activities into the lesson.

In order to educate children on poison prevention, resources from the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System ([www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org)) were utilized. Children were asked several questions about poisons and were educated on general poison safety. With the aid of the NJPIES mascot Spike the “Posion Prevention Porcupine”, the pharmacists played a

game where an object would be shown to the children and they would indicate if the object was dangerous or not. They did this by using a two-sided paddle depicting Spike to show if his quills would be up (the object is a poison) or down (the object is safe). Common toxic household items were used, along with safe-to-eat foods. Through the “Stay-Away” song, children learned that if they don’t know what something is, they should stay away and tell an adult.

After a fun-filled day discussing poison safety, ninety CH Children’s Center preschoolers were given certificates making them each a member of the Poison Patrol. They were left with an understanding that poisons may be found at home but are dangerous and if they don’t know what something is, they should stay away and tell an adult.

### Continuing Education Credit Distribution

Fall 2010 continuing education credits (cycles 4, 5, and 6) will be mailed in the first week of March. Credit for cycles 7 and 8 will be mailed mid-April.

Cycle 9 rotation credits WILL NOT count for this renewal period. Those credits will be distributed at a later date.

## Preceptor Development Continuing Education Program

Back by popular demand in a repeat performance and in appreciation of our preceptors, the Experiential Committee will be again hosting a free live preceptor development continuing education program entitled, “Optimizing Pharmacy Rotation Experiences: Keys to Preceptor Success” (ACPE UAN #0038-000-10-014-L04-P/Knowledge Based Activity). The program will provide 4 contact hours (0.40 CEUs) of live ACPE credits. The program will be held from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on Thursday, April 14, 2011, at the Busch Student Center Multipurpose Room at Rutgers University, located on 604 Bartholomew Road, Piscataway, NJ 08854. Free parking is provided on site and a lunch will be served. Directions and location can be found on the web site: <http://getinvolved.rutgers.edu/centers/center-listing/1>.

The purpose of the program is to share practical advice and real-life experiences regarding managing pharmacy students on introductory and advanced pharmacy practice experiences. The program will also review specific policies of the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy regarding student rotations and resources available to you as one of our preceptors. The program will conclude with small group discussions where you can share your experiences and learn from others, raise concerns or problems you have experienced and how you solved them, or seek advice from other practitioners.

We hope that you will be able to join us for this exciting program. For more information, please visit the preceptor information page on the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy Website ([pharmacy.rutgers.edu](http://pharmacy.rutgers.edu)). Registration is due to Jenny Visaggio in the Business Office (email: [visaggio@pharmacy.rutgers.edu](mailto:visaggio@pharmacy.rutgers.edu) or phone: 732-445-2675 ext. 614) by March 18, 2011. The program will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis, due to constraints of the conference space. If you do register, please follow through with attending, or contact Jenny Visaggio with notification that you are unable to attend so someone else can take advantage of the program and a seat will not be wasted. We look forward to seeing you and having another successful program.

## Upcoming Student Program Dates:

<b>February 7, 2011</b>	Start of Rotation Cycle 8
<b>February 8, 2011</b>	American Pharmacists Association/Academy of Student Pharmacists Career Fair Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy
<b>March 14-18, 2011</b>	Post-Reflection Evaluation and Preparation Seminar (PREP Week) and NAPLEX Review held at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy
<b>March 21-25, 2011</b>	Spring Break—No Rotations
<b>March 25-28, 2011</b>	American Pharmacists Association Annual Convention Seattle, Washington
<b>March 28, 2011</b>	Start of Rotation Cycle 9
<b>May 16, 2011</b>	Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy Graduation College Avenue Campus, New Brunswick

### Giving Students Constructive Feedback

Each pharmacy student should ideally receive feedback at least twice during the course of a rotation. Formal feedback usually comes in the form of a midpoint and final evaluation. Preparing for giving constructive feedback can be a daunting, time-consuming task for a busy preceptor, although it is essential for student growth and development.

The midpoint evaluation is a formal evaluation administered at the half-way point of a rotation.

The purpose of this evaluation is to evaluate the progress a student has made up to this point and help them focus on areas that require improvement. Additionally, this is a great opportunity to identify major areas that require improvement in the case of students who are not performing to expectations and who may be in danger of failing the experience. Although a grade is usually not given at this point in the rotation, the mid-point evalua-

tion should help the student assess how they are performing on the rotation thus far.

The final evaluation is a second formal evaluation that typically occurs on the last day of an experience. The purpose of a final evaluation is to summarize the student's skills and assess knowledge, clinical skills and professionalism over the course of the rotation.

In addition to formal evaluations, the preceptor should always take the opportunity to give informal, ongoing feedback throughout the rotation. Informal feedback can arise out of asking the student open-ended questions about their progress, such as "What did you learn today?", "What may you improve on?", or "What is one topic you would like to learn more about?"

Common barriers to giving feedback encountered by pre-

ceptors include the following:

- "The student knows how they are doing"
- "I don't have time"
- "This is an awkward situation"
- "This behavior was a one-time mistake and surely won't happen again"
- "Students will become defensive if I evaluate them"

Taking the time to complete an evaluation shows the preceptor has an interest in the learner and their professional growth and development. Addressing student's perceptions of their progress by asking them to complete a self-evaluation may support the preceptor's evaluation and make the situation less awkward. Many times, we find students are more critical of their performance than preceptors.



## **Visit Our Preceptor Website!**

Please visit the 'For Preceptors' link on the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy website at <http://pharmacy.rutgers.edu/content/preceptors> for links to our grading forms, preceptor newsletters, and current events.

