

# SABBATICAL GRANT SPOTLIGHT...



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## Sherilyn Houle, BSP, PhD

*Assistant Professor, School of Pharmacy, University of Waterloo*

### **“Travel Medicine and Immunology”**

Sherilyn received a CSHP Foundation Education Sabbatical Grant of \$4,000.

#### **Q: Briefly describe your education sabbatical?**

**A:** This sabbatical was about expanding my knowledge and skills related to immunizations and travel medicine, with the goal of applying it to my research and teaching of pharmacy students at the University of Waterloo, and to a clinical practice at a travel medicine and immunizations clinic. The sabbatical consisted of a week-long course at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in London, England, and the mentorship of Dr. Heather Dixon, the director of the Centre for Family Medicine’s Travel and Vaccination Clinic in Kitchener, Ontario.

#### **Q: How did the sabbatical idea come about?**

**A:** For the past 3 years I have been responsible for the injections training curriculum at the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy, where we train pharmacy students on all aspects of immunization. Working with students and practicing pharmacists, I recognized that while pharmacists were generally comfortable with administering vaccines, many of us have a knowledge gap related to immunology, current vaccination schedules, and identifying vaccination needs among patients. In Ontario, the scope of practice for pharmacists expanded in December 2016 to allow pharmacist-administered vaccines for 13 diseases in addition to influenza. To best equip our students to practice to their full scope, I began to seek opportunities to expand my own knowledge in this area.

#### **Q: How will your sabbatical benefit your pharmacist practice?**

**A:** Support from the sabbatical allowed me to attend the course and dedicate some of my time to focusing on my own learning. With this, we have expanded the content within our injections training program, and students at the University of Waterloo now receive instruction on travel medicine and travel vaccines in addition to the required competencies for vaccinators specified by the Public Health Agency of Canada and provincial pharmacy colleges. The benefits of the sabbatical opportunity are also being applied towards developing tools and frameworks to support practicing pharmacists with providing travel medicine and immunization consultations in their practices, and I look forward to partnering with Dr. Dixon at the Centre for Family Medicine’s Travel and Vaccination Clinic in the near future.

#### **Q: Why should others consider the CSHP Foundation Education Sabbatical Grant?**

**A:** Not only does the CSHP Foundation Education Sabbatical Grant provide financial support to complete an educational activity, it also allows us to reflect upon our own learning needs and dedicate time in our busy lives to personal development. The Education Sabbatical Grant supports pharmacists in their efforts to enhance their own knowledge and skills, which I believe will also result in better outcomes for our patients and students.

#### **Q: What presentations, publications, or teaching opportunities resulted or are planned as a result of the sabbatical?**

**A:** This sabbatical supported the expansion of our training program for students at the University of Waterloo. I am also supervising a graduate student whose thesis project will result in the design and pilot testing of a framework to support pharmacists to provide care related to immunization and travel medicine in their practices. In December, 2017, I published a commentary for the Canadian Journal of Public Health addressing misconceptions and concerns related to pharmacists’ roles in immunization, and I am working on a number of other tools for pharmacists related to influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations, and other vaccines commonly encountered in pharmacy practice.

**The role of the hospital pharmacist is changing; research and education will support the change.**

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