

Neat as a PIN

An Internet-based form of communication among PSW members with similar interests

by Katie Holmes

A PIN in PSW terms is a Practice Interest Network. This program was incorporated into the Society by-laws by the PSW Board of Directors to facilitate the exchange of ideas, via the Internet, among PSW Members having similar areas of interest. The definition and criteria for a PIN can be seen in Table 1. The first PINs were created in 1999, and areas of interest have continued to expand and change since that point in time. This has resulted in the creation of several new PINs. It is now the desire of the Board to increase

TABLE 1. PIN DEFINITION AND CRITERIA

Pharmacy practitioners who have a common interest and are linked via electronic mail with the following purposes:

- Fostering communication
- Sharing expertise, information and experiences
- Disseminating information related to new laws or practice standards as proposed by state or national agencies or groups
- Providing feedback and making recommendations to state or government health care organizations or the UW School of Pharmacy
- Planning and organizing meetings and events
- Meeting other practitioners in the state

the utilization of the PINs that are available for members of PSW.

Currently, there are five PINs that continue to grow in the virtual world of PSW. A short description of each of these groups is listed in Table 2 on the next page. In addition, a new Acute Care PIN has recently been created by combining the previously active Critical Care and Infectious Disease PINs. Previous Infectious Disease PIN chair, Steve Ebert of Meriter Hospital in Madison, and Critical Care PIN co-chairs, Clyde Birringer of Meriter Hospital and Jeff Fish of UW Health in Madison, will serve as leaders for this new PIN. The broader focus of this group will allow for acute care practitioners to communicate experiences and best practices, improve clinical services and share current information with other practitioners in the state who are engaged in or share an interest in acute care pharmacy. [see sample exchange on page 29]

The concept of PINs is natural given our technology and current rate of expanding medical knowledge. We all grow professionally through the exchange of practice ideas and information, thus improving our quality of patient care. Since this is a web-based program, the PINs allow greater flexibility for communicating current information and experiences among colleagues. If you are willing to spend a few minutes on the Internet once a week or even once a month with your pharmacy colleagues who share similar interests, then the infrastructure of a PIN will flourish and grow, and the knowledge of each member within the PIN will continue to expand.

We hope this idea of Practice Interest Networks excites you as a new or continued resource for your practice. If you are currently a member of a PIN, we encour-

“As a pharmacist practicing in drug information and drug use policy at Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center, I find the Medication Use Policy PIN extremely useful in helping me connect in ‘real’ time with other pharmacists throughout the state who may be facing similar issues. It’s an easy way to survey other practitioners to find out how they’re dealing with something and get practical, applicable information quickly.”

— Jane Bubik, PharmD
Drug Information Coordinator
Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center

age you to continue to be active and help revitalize the activity and communication regarding topics of interest within the PIN. The viability of a PIN rests on the individual members. If you would like to get involved in this valuable resource for the first time, sign up today for one or more PINs at WWW.PSWI.ORG/PINS.PDF.

If you have any questions about the PIN program, please call the PSW office at (608)-827-9200.

Katie Holmes is a fourth-year PharmD student at the UW School of Pharmacy. She wrote this article during her clerkship at PSW.

 REGISTER FOR A PIN AND ACCESS THE PIN HANDBOOK AT WWW.PSWI.ORG/PINS.PDF

TABLE 2. CURRENT PHARMACY INTEREST NETWORKS

NEW! ACUTE CARE

A new Acute Care PIN has recently been created by combining the previously active Critical Care and Infectious Disease PINs. The broader focus of this group will allow for acute care practitioners to communicate experiences and best practices, improved clinical services and share current information with other practitioners in the state who are engaged in or share an interest in acute care pharmacy.

Co-Chairs: Clyde Birringer, Jeff Fish, and Steve Ebert

DIABETES

The Diabetes PIN provides an organizational network for PSW members with a practice interest in diabetes mellitus. This PIN provides a method to share diabetes expertise, information, and experiences. This Network also offers feedback and recommendations related to diabetes mellitus to state or government health care organizations or the School of Pharmacy and works to publicize information about diabetes and PIN activities to PSW members-at-large.

Chair: Denise Pigarelli

IMMUNIZATION

The Immunization PIN is currently set up to communicate to its members information relating to the practice of immunizations in the state. This PIN helps to inform members of the most current immunization policies and provides a great opportunity for pharmacists with an interest in immunization to communicate easily and network throughout the state.

Chair: Sue Kleppin

INDEPENDENT PHARMACY PRACTICE

The Independent Pharmacy Practice PIN consists of independent pharmacy professionals in the state of Wisconsin. This PIN provides a forum for the exchange of information and ideas regarding various topics in the area of independent pharmacy practice including topics such as legislative issues and pricing changes. The PIN also allows for professional interaction and networking.

Co-Chairs: Chris Witzany and Marv Moore

MEDICATION USE POLICY

The Medication Use Policy PIN is currently set up for pharmacists involved in the area of drug information and drug-policy related activities in Wisconsin. Members are able to communicate with other pharmacists in order to share expertise, drug-policy information and experiences related to medication use policy.

Co-chairs: Paul Windisch and Lee Vermeulen

PHARMACY RESIDENCY

The Pharmacy Residency PIN consists of residency program directors and resident preceptors in the state of Wisconsin with common practice interests in the area of residency program management. This PIN provides an outlet for communication regarding various topics including how to develop or expand a residency program, the resident recruitment process and successes or problems at specific residency sites. This PIN allows for networking with colleagues in order to facilitate idea generation and professional growth.

Co-chairs: Julie Dagam and Holly Jones