

NEWS RELEASE

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NCPDP ANNUAL CONFERENCE SUMMARY - PHARMACY SERVICES SECTOR OF HEALTHCARE CONVENE ON PHOENIX

SCOTTSDALE, AZ -- The National Council for Prescription Drug Programs, Inc. (NCPDP) hosted its 27th Annual Membership Conference, February 28 – March 3, 2004, in Phoenix, Arizona. The theme of the conference was "Lighting the Way: Navigating the Waters of Change".

Over 875 NCPDP members, speakers, exhibitors and media representatives attended the conference. NCPDP's membership includes representatives from chain and independent pharmacies, drug manufacturers, computer companies and software vendors, pharmacy claims processors, physician services organizations, prescription drug providers, telecommunication vendors, service organizations, governmental and regulatory agencies and more.

The conference began with two (2) days of Joint Technical Work Group sessions, where NCPDP members worked on specific tasks and issues related to the organization's pharmacy standards. NCPDP has eleven (11) current active work groups dealing with topics such as Manufacturer Rebates, Product Identification, Telecommunication, Standard Identification and more. Current areas of focus include e-prescribing, HIPAA Security and the recently released Final Rule for National Provider Identifiers.

On Monday morning, March 1, NCPDP President Lee Ann Stember delivered the State of the Association address, focusing on the need for the industry to successfully navigate the waters of change. She announced the creation of the new Rising Star Award, and introduced the Golden Script Club, a membership referral campaign that will launch this year.

The newly developed Rising Star Award was created to pay tribute to a new member of NCPDP that has provided immediate impact on the organization. Ross D. Martin, M.D., MHA, of Pfizer, was the inaugural award recipient.

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Stember also paid tribute to the 2003-2004 Board of Trustees and Work Group Co-Chairs. Each of these leaders was recognized and received a certificate to commemorate their important role in the organization.

Bing Cagungun, of Aventis Pharmaceuticals, Inc., joined Stember to present the Benjamin D. Ward Distinguished Member Award. Aventis is the long-standing sponsor of this annual honor. The award recipient was the late Frank Mangham, R.Ph., of Walgreen Company. Mangham's spouse, Kathleen, accepted the award on his behalf and was accompanied by Perry Don, R.Ph., of Walgreen Company.

The conference keynote speaker, Benjamin Solomon Carson, Sr., M.D., is a world-renowned pediatric neurosurgeon and is the director of pediatric neurosurgery at The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Baltimore. Dr. Carson gave an inspirational presentation about the path he traveled in life, from being raised by his mother in inner city Detroit to being named head of pediatric neurosurgery at one of the top medical facilities in the world. Dr. Carson emphasized the capacity and capability of the brain to process, store and retrieve information and the need for society to foster an environment where everyone is encouraged and supported to continually drive to learn more, do more and achieve more in life.

The conference featured two (2) days of educational track sessions presented by various leading professionals in the pharmacy industry. Topics discussed in the track sessions included: new designs in pharmacy benefits, patient safety, healthcare costs, electronic prescribing, Medicare issues, customer loyalty, the pharmaceutical marketplace and more.

The exhibit hall featured many new exhibitors this year. The Educational Theater, new this year, allowed exhibitors to present detailed information about their products and services. When the educational track sessions ended, attendees were free to explore the restaurant and entertainment choices available in Phoenix. The President's Dinner, a by-invitation black tie event, recognized the Board of Trustees, Committee Chairs, Work Group Co-Chairs and Staff. The prestigious NCPDP TIME Award (The Individual Member Excellence) was presented at the President's Dinner. Nancy Nemes of WebMD Corporation was honored as the recipient.

Tuesday morning, March 2, outgoing Board of Trustees Chair, Stephen C. Mullenix, R.Ph., spoke about his tenure as NCPDP Chair and the accomplishments of the organization over the past year. Mullenix then passed the gavel to the incoming Board of Trustees Chair, Harold E. Cohen, R.Ph., of *Drug Topics*.

The Industry Executive Roundtable consisting of a panel of industry executives dealt with the topics of pharmaceutical re-importation and the new Medicare legislation. There was spirited discussion about the political and financial implications of re-importation and the profitability and transparency of PBMs in the regulatory environment. The diverse esteemed panel featured Eric Elliott, President of Aetna Pharmacy Management, David Fong a Group Vice President of Long's Drug Stores, Jean Paul Gagnon, Ph.D., Director of Public Policy of Aventis Pharmaceuticals, Terry Latanich, a Government Affairs Consultant for Medco Health Solutions, Bruce Roberts, Executive Vice President of the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) and Chris Ward, President of Ward Health Strategies in Canada. Veteran journalist Susan Dentzer of The NewsHour moderated the panel.

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The last session of the conference was a panel discussion on electronic prescribing. Panelists were Ken Majkowski, Pharm. D., Vice President of Business Development from RxHub, Kevin Hutchinson CEO of SureScript Systems, Inc., Louis Hyman, Executive Vice President & Chief Technology Officer of HealthRamp, Steven Phillips, M.D., CMD of the American Geriatric Association, and Sumit Nagpal, CEO of Wellogic. Dr. Ross Martin of Pfizer moderated the discussion.

ABOUT NCPDP

Founded in 1977, NCPDP is a not-for-profit, ANSI-accredited, Standards Development Organization (SDO). With over 1350 members representing virtually every sector of the pharmacy services industry, NCPDP has made great strides over the last 25 years. NCPDP has established HC Idea, a new product that will create a healthcare identifier for individual healthcare prescribers. The NCPDP Provider Identification Number provides over 68,000 pharmacies with a unique identifying number for interactions with federal agencies and third party processors. NCPDP has eleven (11) active Work Groups dedicated to the technological advancement of pharmacy through standards development. NCPDP's Telecommunication Standard Version 5.1 and Batch Standard Version 1.1 were named the official standards for pharmacy claims in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act's Final Rule. For more information about NCPDP Standards, Educational Programs and NCPDP Work Group meetings, visit the NCPDP website at www.ncdp.org.

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