Advancing Community Pharmacy Institute:
Unifying Academia and Practice for Impact

October 29–31, 2025

American Association of
Colleges of Pharmacy
AACP
Pharmacists Help People Live Healthier, Better Lives.

Where We Go from Here: Challenge Launch

AACP invites colleges and schools of pharmacy, faculty, students, staff, and community pharmacies to partner with external organizations to design and implement bold new initiatives through the **Unite for Impact: A National Collaborative Challenge.**

Speakers: Megan Smith, Kendall Guthrie, and Gretchen Garofoli

Moderator: Olunife Akinmolayan

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Goal

Generate fresh, tangible contributions to the field. This challenge aims to **showcase creative strategies** and **tangible outcomes** led by a team of **faculty, practitioners, learners, and their partners** launching new projects, campaigns, or partnerships that drives measurable change through advocacy, practice transformation, and/or public engagement.

This challenge is a direct follow-on to the insights fostered at the 2025 Advancing Community Pharmacy Institute and provides a concrete opportunity to translate ideas into action by encouraging ongoing collaboration. AACP challenges teams to **DO something new**, **CREATE new partnerships or campaigns**, and **SHARE the impact.**

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Objective

- Foster unprecedented collaboration by uniting pharmacy academia with essential partners across the healthcare spectrum, including **community pharmacists, state associations, national associations, boards of pharmacy, legislators, and other health professions**.

- Selected stories will be featured in a **national multimedia library** to strengthen advocacy, education, and outreach efforts. Together, AACP will amplify the voice, value, and versatility of community pharmacy. We can't wait to see what story you create. Check out the ACT Pharmacy Collaborative 50 Stories from 50 States Multimedia Library.

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Why Now?

- **Current Pharmacy Landscape**
  - Community pharmacy is at a crossroads: workforce shortages, reimbursement pressures, shifting care models.
  - Since 2019, over 7,000 pharmacies have closed, with more than 2,200 closures in 2024 alone—that's about 8 per day, fueling the growth of pharmacy deserts ([NFP](#))

- **Advocacy Momentum**
  - Growing policy focus on expanding pharmacist scope of practice and payment reform.
  - Opportunity to amplify the voice of pharmacy at a critical time for healthcare transformation.

- **Innovation**
  - Ideas from the 2025 *Advancing Community Pharmacy Institute* need a path to action.

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General Challenge Timeline

- Challenge Launch & Registration Opens
  - October 31
- Midpoint Check-In Meeting
  - Early February 2026
- Final Submission
  - April 6, 2026
- Review and Selection
  - April 7 - April 21
- Announcement of Winners
  - Late April 2026

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Teams & Eligibility

Team Makeup

Each team must include at least:

- **Two** faculty members from one or multiple colleges or schools of pharmacy; **at least one faculty must attend the AACP Advancing Community Pharmacy Institute**
- **One** practicing community pharmacists (cannot be full time faculty member at a college/school of pharmacy)
- **Two** trainees (e.g., student pharmacist, resident, fellow, or graduate student).
- **At least one** other partner, which may include representatives from state associations, national associations, boards of pharmacy, legislators, and other health professions. We encourage participants to seek out multiple partners.

Submission Categories

Projects will drive measurable changes in one of the three areas: Culture, Practice, and Advocacy

[Culture] Cultivating a Stronger Community Culture

- Develop and implement new initiatives to promote community pharmacy as a dynamic and rewarding career path within colleges/schools of pharmacy and to prospective students (e.g., pre-pharmacy, high school students). This could include new mentorship programs, experiential learning opportunities, or innovative recruitment strategies.

- Develop projects that integrate community pharmacists more effectively into broader interprofessional healthcare teams, showcasing new workflows or communication strategies. Projects should actively involve other health professions in their design and implementation.

- Create and launch a new public awareness campaign focused on educating the public about the expanded capabilities and services that community pharmacists can provide. Consider collaborating with public health organizations or local community groups for broader reach.

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[Practice] Pharmacists' Expansion of Patient Care Services in Community Pharmacy

- Explore and pilot new business models or strategies for medical billing and diversified revenue streams within community pharmacy settings. Focus on creating actionable plans and demonstrating initial implementation or potential. Projects should consider engaging with payers and other healthcare entities to establish new models.

- Propose and initiate new ways for community pharmacies to integrate into value-based care models, showcasing the impact of pharmacist-provided services on patient outcomes and cost reduction.

- Initiate and highlight new, positive physician-pharmacist collaborations that demonstrate improved patient care outcomes, enhanced communication, and shared responsibilities. This should go beyond existing relationships to forge novel, impactful partnerships.

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[Advocacy] Advocating for the Future of Community Pharmacy

- Design and execute an activity for students (and faculty) to actively promote community pharmacy's value to legislative and regulatory stakeholders. This could involve virtual or in-person meetings, policy brief development, or organized letter-writing campaigns. Emphasis should be placed on building new relationships with legislators and board of pharmacy members.

- Model a collaborative advocacy day of service, potentially partnering with national pharmacy organizations (e.g., APhA, NASPA, NCPA) or state-level associations, to amplify the voice of community pharmacy on a specific legislative or regulatory issue.

- Identify and engage new advocacy champions (e.g., local leaders, community figures, other healthcare professionals) to support and promote community pharmacy advancements.

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Submission Package

Narrative Submission

- Word limit: 1,500 words max (not including appendices)

- Must include:
  - Problem Statement
  - Project Objectives
  - Description of New Initiative
  - Outcomes Achieved
  - Sustainability/Next Steps

Supporting Appendices

- Page limit: up to 5 pages

- May include:
  - Visuals
  - Workflow diagrams
  - Data tables
  - Partner letters
  - Media
  - Testimonials

Prizes & Incentives

All Participants

- Certificates of participation
- Opportunity for stories to be archived in the national multimedia library for use in advocacy and education

Category Winners

- Poster or podium presentation at the 2026 AACP Annual Meeting

- Highlight in AACP's online multimedia library and newsletter

- Recognition in communication by national partners

Grand Prize Winner

- Featured presentation at the 2026 AACP Annual Meeting

- Dedicated multimedia package (press release, video highlight, feature article)

- Publication support to develop a manuscript or white paper

- Invitation to policy roundtables with other national partners

Example Narrative

Visit the Challenge landing page for additional participant materials.

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Example Narrative (Practice)

Project Idea

The Community Care Pharmacy Collaborative, which includes our school of pharmacy partnered with a federally qualified health center (FQHC) to expand point-of-care testing (POCT) for influenza, strep throat, and COVID-19. The goal was to increase patient access to rapid diagnostic testing in a community with limited urgent care options.

Example Narrative (Practice)

Description of Collaboration

Our new initiative was built through a unique collaboration between the community pharmacy, which offered accessible hours, a private consultation space, and pharmacist expertise. The FQHC clinic provided clinical oversight and created referral pathways for patients needing prescriptions or additional care. Faculty from the college of pharmacy guided program design, workflow mapping, and student training. Trainees supported patient education, data collection, and service evaluation. By bringing together these stakeholders, the team created a bi-directional referral system where clinic staff referred patients with mild respiratory symptoms to the pharmacy for rapid POCT. Patients testing positive at the pharmacy were referred to the clinic for diagnosis and prescribing when appropriate. This partnership demonstrated how academic, clinical, and community settings can combine their strengths to expand healthcare access.

Example Narrative (Practice)

Program-Level Outcomes (Sample Placeholder Data)

- Number of patients tested in first 3 months: [XX]

- Average wait time reduction compared to clinic baseline: [XX%]

- Percentage of positive tests appropriately referred and treated within 24 hours: [XX%]

- Patient satisfaction score (survey-based): [XX/5]

- Estimated healthcare cost savings compared to urgent care/ED use: [$XX]

Example Narrative (Practice)

Impact Statement

This project underscores the power of collaboration in advancing pharmacy practice. By leveraging existing pharmacy infrastructure and clinic expertise, the team created a replicable model that demonstrates how POCT can be implemented without waiting for new legislation or policy reform. Ultimately, this initiative shows how practice innovation can both meet immediate patient needs and lay the groundwork for scalable change, amplifying the value of pharmacists as essential members of the healthcare team.

Example Narrative (Practice)

Additional Materials

- A short video (3 min max) presentation or visuals highlighting the project.

- Supporting Appendices (max 5 pages): data tables, workflows, media, partner letters, etc.

These materials are optional but highly encouraged for participating teams. The stronger your package, the higher your chance of winning.

Partnership Support

Reach out to aacpcenter@aacp.org to submit your partner support request.

Collaborators

- Bring expertise, networks, or resources to project teams

- Providing subject matter experts to serve as mentors or advisors to challenge teams

- Co-developing toolkits, templates, or practice models

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Supporters

- Provide in-kind support, guidance, visibility opportunities, or data expertise

- Offer in-kind resources such as access to data, evaluation tools, communication staff, or design for campaign materials

Amplifiers

- Share winning stories broadly with the pharmacy community and the public

- Publish features on winning teams in their newsletters, journals, podcasts, or national meetings

- Leverage social media reach by co-branding and pushing out challenge content to broader audience, including policymakers

How to Submit Your Partner Support Request

- Reach out to aacpcenter@aacp.org to submit your partner support request.

- Subject Line: Unite for Impact Support Request

- Message:
  - Organization you would like to receive support
  - Brief description of your project
  - Explanation of how this organization can support your project

NASPA — NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF STATE PHARMACY ASSOCIATIONS

NCPA® — NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION

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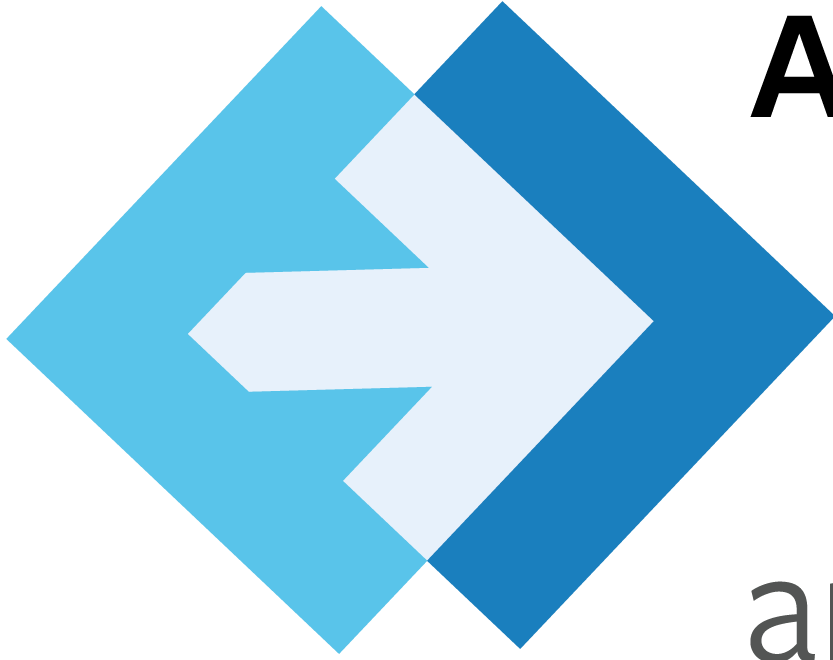
Questions

For general questions, please reach out to aacpcenter@aacp.org

AACP Staff Contacts

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