

Debra S. Devereaux



Life Is What Happens While You Are Busy Making Other Plans

Deb Devereaux approached her career with a well-thought-out plan. She selected pharmacy as her career path because it would allow her the opportunity to build on her keen interest in science and the flexibility to raise a family while also pursuing a career. She spent summers working as an intern in various practice settings to determine which would be the best fit for her interests and methodically chose to pursue a business degree to help achieve her goals. Despite the meticulous planning, she readily admits that some other factors converged to influence her career path: personal relationships, her pharmacy colleagues and mentors, and serendipity. In the world of pharmacy, Deb's career has turned out to be somewhat unusual. Leveraging the skills she developed in hospital pharmacy management and through her MBA training, she has become one of the nation's experts on pharmacy reimbursement issues and the Medicare Part D benefit.

Deb is currently Senior Vice President of Pharmacy Services at Gorman Health Group. She received her bachelor of science degree in pharmacy from the University of Colorado and a master's degree in business administration from Regis University. She is a board certified ambulatory care pharmacist.

Deb's advice to young pharmacists is: *approach life with a plan and a strong dose of open mindedness and flexibility, seek out mentors, and help and support others.*



Dear Young Pharmacist,

I appreciate the opportunity to write to you regarding my pharmacy career, because I feel it is always good to reflect on how you got here and why you came. Perhaps some of the forks in my road will assist you in envisioning your own future.

I grew up in Western Colorado in a small picturesque mountain town. In high school, one of my after-school jobs was to wrap Christmas presents at the local pharmacy. The relief pharmacist, Theo Colburn, and I spoke about my interest in science and possible career choices. She encouraged me to look at pharmacy school because it was a great science career option, and you could easily combine it with raising a family. I enrolled at the University of Colorado and was accepted to pharmacy school. I specifically selected different intern opportunities (retail, industry, and hospitals) so I could decide where I felt I would be happiest. Although I liked the patient interactions at the retail pharmacy, I did not want to sell nail polish or make coke floats. I found the pharmaceutical manufacturer experience fascinating but missed seeing patients. I loved the hospital experience—exciting environment, bright and engaged colleagues, and interesting work. I was hired at the hospital after graduation and was promoted to supervisor and then assistant director after three years.

The years spent in the hospital were an excellent beginning for my career because it gave me the opportunities to work on committees and teams with physicians and nurses; build new clinical programs; get grounded in resource management and budgets, personnel management, and conflict resolution; and teach students, interns, technicians, and pharmacists. I was a voting member of the Institutional Review Board, which allowed me to have a front row seat into research projects and work with nursing and physician specialists. It became apparent to me that an advanced degree in business would be helpful in my career and conceivably be a requirement down the road. I originally intended to pursue a post baccalaureate doctor of pharmacy degree and residency but a marriage proposal and a husband with a Denver-based job tipped