



*Carly Rodriguez, PharmD*

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## **Sometimes It's Not About What You Know, It's About Who You Know and What They Think About You**

Carly admits that being in the right place at the right time has contributed to her success. It was her interest in volunteering in associations while she was a student pharmacist that led Carly to explore career opportunities in managed care pharmacy. She knew that a postgraduate year (PGY) 1 residency was likely the minimum prerequisite for landing an entry-level job in managed care, so she applied for the match. While applying for a residency, she stumbled upon—and landed—an attractive opportunity that would become her first managed care pharmacy role. Being in the right place at the right time can only get you so far, though, so Carly shares other tips for success, including building her professional network and taking every opportunity to give back to those who follow her.

Carly Rodriguez is currently Pharmacy Director of Clinical Innovation at Moda Health in Portland, Oregon. Before joining Moda Health, she was Manager of Clinical Pharmacy Services and Residency Program Director at OmedaRx. She received her PharmD degree at the University of Washington School of Pharmacy. Being true to her credo of giving back, Carly is an active member and volunteer in the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP), both at the national and local level, and is also a volunteer and guest lecturer at her alma mater.

Carly's advice is: ***Remember that pharmacy is a small world, so you're always making an impression, whether good or bad, on other pharmacists who you may encounter in the future.***



***Dear Young Pharmacist,***

Depending on the region of the country you live in or what school of pharmacy you attended, you may have entered pharmacy school with a preconceived notion of what kind of pharmacist you're going (or not going) to be. I encourage you to keep an open mind because, the truth is, when I entered pharmacy school

I didn't even know it was possible to be a pharmacy director at a health plan or health insurance company, or what some might call a "managed care pharmacist."

So, how did I discover this path in pharmacy? It was through *curiosity*, *commitment*, and *volunteerism*. What I knew about myself going into pharmacy school was that I am analytical, love to problem-solve, enjoy research, and want to develop as a leader within the profession. I sought out opportunities within school (e.g., courses, projects, independent study) and outside of school (e.g., internships, volunteer opportunities) to pursue those interests and skills. In doing so, I discovered the AMCP. This organization opened my eyes to the potential of bettering the lives of hundreds, thousands, or even millions of patients at a time rather than patient-by-patient in a traditional pharmacy setting.

I discovered that pharmacists who work in the managed care arena get to evaluate newly approved medications, analyze trends in medication use and cost, and develop innovative programs to ensure clinically appropriate, safe, and cost-effective use of medications by large populations of people. So, I committed myself to learning as much as I possibly could about this pharmacy field by attending AMCP conferences and volunteering to moderate continuing education sessions. I signed up to participate in AMCP's rigorous annual competition aimed at evaluating a new medication (the Pharmacy & Therapeutics [P&T] Competition), completed an internship at a health plan, took elective courses in areas such as managed care and pharmacoeconomics, and signed up for advance pharmacy practice experiences (APPEs) related to managed care.

My managed care internship, coursework, and APPE rotations solidified that this was the right career path for me. As I approached graduation from my PharmD program, I applied to managed care ASHP-accredited residency programs. Through this application process, I became aware of a pharmacist position available at the site where I had completed my internship. I found myself in the exact right place at the exact right time and was fortunate to enter the managed care field as a pharmacist without a residency. Let me emphasize the *exact right place at the exact right time* portion of my previous statement because the more common path to becoming a managed care pharmacist straight from pharmacy school is through residency training, which I am a huge proponent of! Residency training allows you to learn from seasoned pharmacists, gain exposure to aspects of pharmacy that you otherwise would not be exposed to as a staff pharmacist, complete a longitudinal project and seek publication, and develop leadership skills.

My first job in the field of managed care pharmacy was as a clinical pharmacist evaluating newly approved medications to determine how to best manage their use within a large health plan population. In this role, I was able to develop a management strategy for hepatitis C medications that encouraged clinically sound and