

**January 2021**

*eScripts is a monthly newsletter highlighting faculty, staff, students and alumni of the CU Skaggs School of Pharmacy.*

## Reflecting on 2020



When the novel coronavirus began to spread in Colorado and across the nation and world, students, faculty and staff suited up for a year unlike any other.

From faculty who worked on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic to researchers who worked on treatments for COVID-19 to the students who prepared to play a vital role in vaccine distribution, the CU Pharmacy community proved it could make an impact on health in dire circumstances.

Even through a year of challenges, the work didn't stop. In classrooms, rotations, labs, hospitals and clinics, **students and faculty continued to bring top accolades to the school.**

**Keep reading**

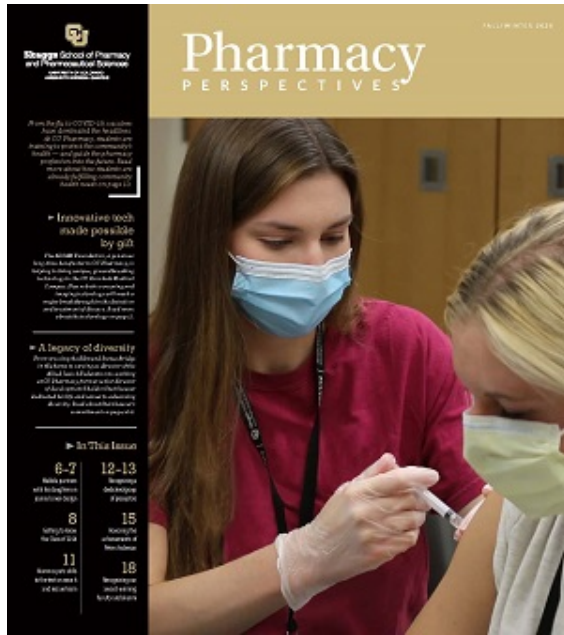
### **Pharmacy Perspectives has arrived**

As we approach the New Year, the CU Pharmacy community is reflecting on how we're making a difference during a historic year.

In the latest issue of **Pharmacy Perspectives**, our official magazine, we're exploring how students are training to protect the community's

health — and guide the profession into the future.

As you read the digital issue, hover over the pages to watch videos and click on links that lead to more information about our programs.



**Read the magazine**



CU Pharmacy celebrated the accomplishments of six PhD and Master's students as they graduated in December.

Graduate Reena Berman, PhD, a Senior Engineer at Novartis Gene Therapies in Longmont, works with the science behind drug manufacturing on the company's Manufacturing, Science and Technology team. She recently discussed how her experiences with the CU Pharmacy community led to a career in innovation.

[Read more](#)

### Celebrating Beverly Brunson's career

After a career of providing service, support and mentorship to countless pharmacy students, Director of Student Services Beverly Brunson is retiring from her position on Jan. 1.



*Beverly Brunson*

Director Brunson has been with the University of Colorado for the majority of her distinguished career. She started as Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Fund at CU Denver in 1987, followed by a transition to Assistant Director of Admissions at CU Denver in 1989. She joined the School of Pharmacy in 1994 as Director of Admissions, and was subsequently appointed Director of Student Services in 1997.

In recognition of her distinguished career, a diversity scholarship in Brunson's name will be established at CU Pharmacy in 2021.

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## Faculty featured on ASHP TV



Associate Professor Sarah Anderson, PharmD, and Associate Professor Joel Marrs, PharmD, shared some positivity at the American Society of Health System Pharmacists (ASHP) Midyear Conference as they were featured in an ASHP TV Good News segment.

Earlier this year, they participated in the Stay-at-Home Pride 5K in which they raised over \$600 for The Center on Colfax, the largest LGBTQ community center in the Rocky Mountain region. The show also highlighted the work of Julianna Kluemper, PharmD, a graduate of the CU Ambulatory Care residency program, for her and her husband's volunteer work with Amp the Cause Community Day.

**Watch the video**

Other highlights from the conference include presentations from Anderson, Marrs and Professor Robert MacLaren, PharmD. Assistant Professor Paul Reynolds, PharmD, moderated the presentation session.

In addition, third-year students Sarah Galante and Steven Romero presented their poster, "Assessing characteristics and outcomes in post-COVID-19 patients admitted to a long-term acute care facility." Director of Experiential Programs Megan Thompson, PharmD, served as the mentor for the student project.

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## Aquilante published in JAMA Network Open



*Professor Christina Aquilante, PharmD*

Professor Christina Aquilante, PharmD, was recently a co-author on a study published in *JAMA Network Open*, "Prescribing prevalence in pediatric patients of medications with potential genotype guided dosing." The study consisted of 16 health systems representing approximately 2.9 million pediatric patients nationwide.

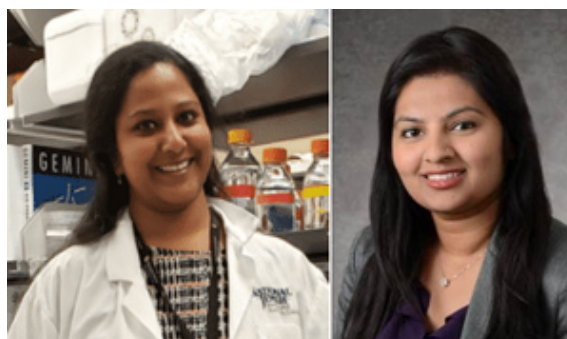
Aquilante contributed data from our campus's data warehouse, which includes patients from UHealth and Children's Hospital Colorado. The study found that opportunities for pharmacogenetic implementation among pediatric patients in the U.S. are abundant, particularly for commonly prescribed antiemetics, analgesics, and antidepressants.

[Read the article](#)

## Patel lab members featured at AES conference

Members of the Patel lab were recently prominently featured in American Epilepsy Society's (AES) 2020 virtual conference.

Toxicology graduate student Ashwini Sri Hari was an invited speaker in an Investigator Workshop titled "Metabolism-Targeted Treatments for Epilepsy Revealed Through Studies of Ketogenic Diet Mechanisms."



*Ashwini Sri Hari and Rajeswari (Raji) Banerji, PhD*

Her abstract was also selected for a talk in the conference's Basic Mechanisms Platform session. The title of the paper she presented was "Redox regulated mTOR, the master charioteer: reining in neuroinflammation and hyperexcitability."

Rajeswari (Raji) Banerji, PhD, postdoctoral fellow, was an invited speaker in the Dravet Syndrome Research (DSF) Roundtable held prior to the main AES conference. The DSF research roundtable is one of the most popular and best attended events held in conjunction with the annual AES meetings. Banerji received a postdoctoral fellowship from DSF in 2018, and in this presentation she reported key findings from that work, in which she identified a drug that modulates the gluconeogenesis pathway can reduce seizures and restore metabolic function in a zebrafish model of Dravet syndrome. Additionally, her submitted abstract received special recognition for being selected for the Investigator's Workshop Poster Session.

## Student featured by IPhO

P3 student Chidinma Onyia is leading the way as a student member of the Industry Pharmacists Organization (IPhO).

Onyia was recently featured in IPhO's Student Leadership Spotlight.

In the video, Onyia discusses how she secured an industry internship by reaching out to an IPhO guest speaker and shares valuable advice for students looking to land a role in industry.



Student Chidinma Onyia

**Watch the video**

## Resident selected as ASHP Foundation Literature Award recipient



Resident Marissa Powell, PharmD

University of Colorado Hospital resident and alumna Marissa Powell, PharmD, received the national Student Research Award from the American Society for Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP).

Associate Professor Scott Mueller, PharmD, and Assistant Professor Paul Reynolds, PharmD served as Powell's mentors on the publication "Assessment of opioid cross-reactivity and provider perceptions in hospitalized patients with reported opioid allergies," published in the *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*.

## Photos of the month



After months of fighting on the coronavirus pandemic front lines, CU Pharmacy faculty members rolled up their sleeves to receive some of the first COVID-19

vaccines.

University of Colorado Hospital critical care pharmacists **Ty Kiser, PharmD, Scott Mueller, PharmD, Paul Reynolds, PharmD**, and Denver Health ambulatory care clinical care pharmacy specialist **Sarah Anderson, PharmD**, pictured above, were among the first to receive the vaccine.

Stay tuned for more coverage of this important milestone and read more about our frontline workers below:

**Read about our frontline pharmacists**

## CU Pharmacy Thought Leaders

From discussing the price of medication to sharing insight about the COVID-19 vaccine, our CU Pharmacy professionals are in the news:

- **CGTN America: COVID-19 vaccine distribution challenges, feat. Gina Moore, PharmD, MBA**
- **Denver7: The U.S. spends a lot on prescription medications. Here's what Colorado is doing to help you pay less, feat. Gina Moore, PharmD, MBA**

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