

Student Pharmacist Chapters of Industry-Focused Professional Organizations: A Comparison of IPhO and AMCP

Interest among student pharmacists to evaluate career opportunities in the pharmaceutical industry has grown significantly in recent years. This is evidenced by an increase in the availability of undergraduate industry electives, rotations, internships, and industry-focused post-graduate fellowships/residencies. Consistent with this trend is the emergence and growth on university campuses of industry-focused student groups.

An important goal for all of these groups is to enhance student pharmacists' understanding of industry, help them evaluate career opportunities, and prepare them to pursue an industry-focused career. Each student group or chapter engages in activities consistent with the respective national organization's mission and vision. Industry-focused student organizations deliver value to student pharmacists who choose to participate, which may include:

- Raising awareness of the diverse roles that industry pharmacists fulfill in the industry
- Creating opportunities for student pharmacists to connect with industry pharmacists
- Providing opportunities to participate in industry-focused scholarly activities
- Working with pharmacy school faculty/administration to promote access to industry-focused internships, rotations, and/or other experiential opportunities.

The Industry Pharmacists Organization (IPhO) was launched nationally in 2012 to help meet the needs of the growing number of industry pharmacists and student pharmacists interested in exploring pharmaceutical industry careers. The emergence of this new pharmacist-focused professional organization has raised questions about how IPhO and other organizations (including AMCP) compare, and how student pharmacists can make an informed choice about which one or more of these organizations can best help them realize their professional goals.

The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) has over 7,000 non-pharmacist and pharmacist members globally and about 85 student chapters. The AMCP

mission and vision is broad-based and focuses on improving patient health by ensuring access to high-quality, cost-effective medications and other therapies. AMCP members include a wide variety of healthcare and business professionals from insurance, managed care organizations, pharmacy benefit management companies, and pharmaceutical companies. Membership is comprised of non-healthcare professionals, as well as pharmacists, physicians, nurses, scientists, and statisticians, among others.

In contrast, the mission of the Industry Pharmacists Organization (IPhO) is solely focused to advancing the careers of industry pharmacists through:

- Providing timely and relevant information that is vital to its members.
- Raising awareness among employers and industry executives about the role that industry pharmacists can play in drug development, commercialization, and optimal medication use.
- Providing targeted resources and coaching to enhance members' continuing education and professional development.
- Creating opportunities for members to network and exchange ideas with their industry pharmacist peers.
- Providing access to attractive and relevant employment opportunities available in the industry.

IPhO offers membership exclusively to pharmacists and student pharmacists (including its 92 chapter national network), and advocates for the integral role that pharmacists play in the pharmaceutical industry. IPhO looks not only to advance the medical, clinical, and scientific roles for pharmacists in industry, but also to advocate for the value of industry pharmacists in commercial functions and other diverse areas of the pharmaceutical industry. The IPhO vision for its student pharmacist members is to be recognized as the best prepared among all student pharmacists to pursue pharmaceutical industry-focused career opportunities. National Student Members have an excellent working knowledge of common industry pharmacist roles and key pharmaceutical industry driving forces, as well as an understanding of the skills and experiences necessary to become a successful industry pharmacist.

These two organizations offer the following to student and industry pharmacists:

AMCP serves its pharmacist and non-pharmacist members in many ways, including through live national conferences, online learning programs, research in peer-reviewed literature and advocacy. Each of these offerings is designed with the goal of advancing professional knowledge, improving the design and delivery of pharmacy benefits, and ultimately, enhancing patient satisfaction and health outcomes. AMCP publishes the peer-reviewed *Journal of Managed Care Pharmacy*. In addition, AMCP provides members with exclusive access to databases and tracking services that provide analysis and documentation on health care reform implementation and federal and state legislative initiatives.

IPhO and its industry pharmacist/student pharmacist community is singularly focused on the needs, wants, and concerns of student pharmacists, industry fellows, and experienced industry pharmacists. IPhO provides student pharmacists with a network of like-minded pharmacist professionals, opportunities for leadership on a variety of national and local committees, virtual internships, publication opportunities, participation in industry-focused scholarly activities, confidential one-on-one career coaching services, and professional development resources such as databases for industry-focused internships, fellowships, and residencies.

On the surface, these two organizations may seem to offer the overlapping benefits for student pharmacists interested in evaluating the opportunities for a career in the pharmaceutical industry. However, there are distinct differences between the two organizations that merit a serious discussion with school leaders who have the responsibility of approving and providing choices in the availability of student organizations.

IPhO and AMCP: A Side-by-Side Comparison

	IPhO	AMCP
Mission	Advance the careers of industry pharmacists	Improve patient health by ensuring access to high-quality, cost-effective medications and other therapies.
Vision	<p>IPhO National Student Members are recognized as the best prepared among all student pharmacists to pursue pharmaceutical industry-focused career opportunities.</p> <p>National Student Members have an excellent working knowledge of common industry pharmacist roles and key pharmaceutical industry driving forces, as well as an understanding of the skills and experiences necessary to become a successful industry pharmacist.</p>	<p>AMCP is the professional association leading the way to help patients get the medications they need at a cost they can afford.</p>
Location	US-focused	US and International
Audience	Exclusively Pharmacists and Student Pharmacists	Pharmacists and non-pharmacists, health care practitioners, and others who develop and provide clinical, educational and business management services.
Signature Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development, Networking and Resources • Comprehensive guidance on fellowship and non-fellowship paths to industry • Industry Pharmacist-only job board, Fellowship catalog, and Internship catalog • Personal 1-1 Coaching Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Career Center • Written resources - JMCP • Professional Development • P&T tool kits • P&T Competition

Summary

This document outlines the significant differences between IPhO and AMCP, which should help student pharmacists to make an informed choice about whether one or both of these organizations will best meet their personal and professional needs.

IPhO has a focused mission and vision, and it provides targeted industry-focused membership benefits and services that are available to industry pharmacists and student pharmacists.

The majority of pharmacist and non-pharmacist members of AMCP are employed by Health Insurers and Pharmacy Benefit Management companies. There are also a modest number of industry employees who have responsibilities for market access and managed markets customers who belong to AMCP.

It is understandable that prior to the creation of IPhO, some AMCP student chapters have deviated from the AMCP national mission/goals in order to try to accommodate local student pharmacists interested in a career in industry. With the arrival of IPhO and its 92 chapter network, many student pharmacists around the US interested in developing an industry career now have a choice based upon their individual professional needs.

There are tremendous benefits to joining either organization, particularly if the relatively low dues expenses are not a factor. Students should be able to make the best choice for their own individual career path.

Students are encouraged to share this document with local faculty and administration to support the decision-making process related to student organizations.