

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 post-graduate fellowships/residencies. Consistent with this trend is the emergence and growth on university campuses of industry-focused student groups, both with and without an affiliation with a specific national professional organization.

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. They all 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.

Until recently, there were very limited options for participating in student pharmacist chapters of industry-focused professional organizations. Several Drug Information Association (DIA) University and regional chapters exist, focusing on the drug information components of industry. However, their membership is very diversified and does not advocate for any particular professional type.

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 6,000 non-pharmacist and pharmacist members globally. The AMCP mission and vision is broad-based and focuses on empowering its pharmacist and non-pharmacist members to serve society by using sound medication management principles and strategies to improve health care for all. AMCP members include a wide variety of healthcare and business professionals from insurance, pharmacy benefit management, 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:

- Timely and relevant information for members
- Awareness of the role that industry pharmacists play in drug development and medication use
- Targeted resources and coaching
- Networking and employment opportunities

IPhO offers membership exclusively to pharmacists and student pharmacists, 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 vision of IPhO is for pharmacists to be universally recognized within the industry as being the best professionally equipped to contribute to the development, commercialization, promotion and optimal use of medicines.

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 “industry” organizations may seem to offer the overlapping benefits for student pharmacists interested in evaluating the opportunities for a career in the pharmaceutical industry. However, as described in this position paper, there are distinct differences between the two organizations that merit a serious discussion with school officials who have the responsibility of approving and providing choices in the availability of student organizations.

IPhO and DIA: A Side-by-Side Comparison

	IPhO	AMCP
Mission	Advance the careers of industry pharmacists	To empower its non-pharmacist and pharmacist members to serve society by using sound medication management principles and strategies to improve health care for all
Vision	Pharmacist members are universally recognized within the industry as being the best equipped to contribute to the development, commercialization, promotion and optimal use of medicines	Managed care pharmacy principles are based upon the use of scientific evidence to achieve healthy outcomes while making the best use of money spent on medications and their management
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 • Industry-focused scholarly activities • Industry Pharmacist-only job board, and Fellowship and Internship databases • Personal 1-1 Coaching Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Career Center • Written resources- JMCP • Professional Development • P&T tool kits

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 provides targeted 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 the Health Insurers and Pharmacy Benefit Management companies. There are also a significant amount of industry employees who have responsibilities for 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 include some benefits for student pharmacists interested in a career in industry. With the arrival of IPhO, students interested in developing an industry career now have a choice based upon their individual professional needs.

There are tremendous benefits to joining both organizations, 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.