

The Pharmacy Playbook: Conversations with ASHP Leadership

Episode 1: Draft Recommendations from the ASHP Task Force on Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Description of Podcast Topic: In the first episode of “season two” of ASHP’s popular podcast with pharmacy leadership, host Paul Abramowitz, ASHP CEO, discusses the preliminary recommendations from the ASHP Task Force on Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with ASHP President Tom Johnson and Paul Walker, Chair of the Task Force. The ASHP leaders talk about the need to address the range of current and historical issues facing Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in ASHP’s membership and the profession of pharmacy, and to assess issues of intolerance and inequity that impact other minority groups represented within the organization’s membership and the overall profession of pharmacy.

Paul Abramowitz: Thank you for joining us for another season of ASHP’s leadership podcast series.

I’m your host, Paul Abramowitz, the CEO of ASHP. Today, we’re going to talk about the ASHP Task Force on Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—why it was formed and what we hope to accomplish. We’ll also discuss the Task Force’s preliminary recommendations. And we’re especially happy to be sharing these long-term, sustainable recommendations with you during Black History Month.

With me for this conversation is Tom Johnson, ASHP President, and Paul Walker, Chair of the Task Force. Welcome Tom and Paul.

Tom Johnson: Thank you, Paul, for having us here to be part of this important discussion. I can tell you that the Task Force has been working very hard to create draft recommendations to advance ASHP’s strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for all under-represented groups. But before we get into the recommendations, I think we first take a step back and talk about what led up to the formation of the Task Force.

Paul Abramowitz: Absolutely Tom. ASHP has a longstanding commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion but we understand that there is much work to be done, which has been underscored by the tragic deaths of George Floyd Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and too many others.

The urgency for individuals, communities, and organizations of all types to prioritize actions that lead to change has never been greater, and as we start a new year, ASHP is determined to help eliminate racism, discrimination, and inequities that impact other minority and underrepresented populations in healthcare and society more broadly.

The ASHP Task Force on Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was formed to advise ASHP on specific, actionable steps to further address and take inventory of matters of racial diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The critical work of this Task Force will ensure that ASHP is maximizing its capacity to affect social change in the pharmacy community and beyond.

Tom Johnson: This effort has moved quite quickly. In June 2020, the ASHP Board of Directors unanimously approved the creation of the task force, and by mid-July, 18 ASHP members were named to the Task Force, which is chaired by Paul Walker.

Paul Walker: Yes, and I am privileged to lead this national effort that takes action on racism, combats disparities, and prioritizes meaningful actions and solutions for the pharmacy profession.

- We truly want ASHP to be an organization where everyone feels included.
 - A component of that inclusion is connecting with members, so they are a part of what we are working toward.
- The Task Force is examining everything ASHP does to serve and engage members—from governance, committees, products, programs, and services. It is looking at how we communicate with our members so that all members see themselves in ASHP.

Paul Abramowitz: ASHP is sincerely committed to doing our part to help create important changes that make our profession more socially just, equitable, and inclusive for members and pharmacy professionals who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, often referred to by the acronym, BIPOC.

We've talked about what led up to the development of the Task Force. Let's talk about what this group hopes to accomplish. Paul, can you take us through that?

Paul Walker: The Task Force is charged with taking inventory of ASHP's efforts in the areas of racial diversity, equity, and inclusion as they relate to issues facing BIPOC pharmacy professionals. The Task Force is also charged with making recommendations on new or enhanced efforts ASHP may undertake in the following six areas:

- Governance and committees such as the ASHP and ASHP Foundation boards of directors, commissions, councils, sections and forums, House of Delegates, committees on nominations, and ASHP advisory bodies
- Education and training
- Research
- Advocacy
- Publications
- Marketing and communications

Tom Johnson: That's right, Paul. By having those six areas already laid out, we were ready to hit the ground running when the Task Force held our first virtual meeting in August.

We focused the discussion on the Task Force's goals and deliverables and had a robust dialogue on ASHP's current and historical efforts regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We created three subgroups focused on developing actionable and sustainable recommendations organized by focus areas and target audience:

- Governance and Committees
- Education and Training, Research, and Publications
- Advocacy, Marketing and Communications

Starting in September, each subgroup was tasked with developing actionable and sustainable recommendations to share with the full task force for discussion, as well as the ASHP membership.

Paul Walker: As the subgroups started their work, we were very aware of including the ASHP membership in the process.

- Wanted to be inclusive so shared recommendations with ASHP membership
 - Survey
 - Town Hall at the Midyear Clinical Meeting in December.
 - Opportunity for members to provide feedback on the recommendations and ask questions.
- Draft recommendations will be presented to the Board, and once finalized, they will be published in *AJHP*.
- The preliminary recommendations can be found on ashp.org, and we will update those once the Board approves the final recommendations.

Paul Abramowitz: The preliminary recommendations will continue to advance ASHP's strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for BIPOC ASHP members.

I'd like to follow up on something you said earlier Paul about inclusivity. An important component of drafting the recommendations was gathering input from members. ASHP is committed to making the needed improvements to ensure that BIPOC pharmacy professionals see themselves in ASHP and that ASHP is an organization where everyone feels included in all ASHP membership areas.

Tom Johnson: Now that we've talked about the inclusive process used to develop the draft recommendations, I'd say it's time to discuss the outcomes. We have a robust list of recommendations for each of the three focus areas, which again are:

- Governance and Committees
- Education and Training, Research, and Publications
- Advocacy, Marketing and Communications

So let's start with the first area—Governance and Committees.

Paul Abramowitz: Well Tom, after much discussion and research, the Task Force identified seven draft recommendations regarding governance and committees as they relate to ASHP.

- A common theme is increasing racial diversity on committees and appointments, as well as identifying and implementing ways to increase the presence of BIPOC ASHP members in awards and recognition programs, and in leadership positions.
- ASHP should change its bylaws for approval by the ASHP House of Delegates in 2021 to make all active members of ASHP eligible to serve on the ASHP Committee on Nominations and make serving in the ASHP House of Delegates preferred versus required.
- ASHP should seek ways to help ASHP state affiliates prioritize and align their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts with those of ASHP with the goal of increasing BIPOC members in hospital and health-system pharmacy at the state and local levels.

Paul Walker: That brings us to the draft recommendations as they relate to the second area—Education and Training, Research, and Publications. This was an area that received a lot of feedback from members during the Townhall at Midyear. ASHP members are a very passionate and dedicated group.

- One of the most rewarding parts of this process was to hear from our dedicated students on these recommendations.
- Many students attended the Town Hall session at the Midyear meeting, and we engaged in a great dialogue around how to have conversations about diversity and inclusion at their residency program and with pharmacy leaders.
- I urge all pharmacy leaders to welcome these conversations and start the dialogue with the next generation of pharmacy leaders.

There are 16 draft recommendations focused on a fairly broad area.

- Many of the recommendations center on the concept of encouraging increased participation from BIPOC pharmacy students in residency programs, education and ongoing training. This can be accomplished by updating recruitment processes, fostering a more inclusive environment, and understanding disparities in pharmacy residency applicants versus positions granted.
- Preceptors should be encouraged to include topic discussions with all students on health disparities and social determinants of health including race and socio-economic status.
- Hospitals and health-systems should be encouraged to provide continuous professional development and training to leaders and staff on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- ASHP should refine the current student and practitioner mentorship program and ensure BIPOC students and practitioners have equal access to mentors that can guide them on how to obtain a residency or career in hospital and health-system pharmacy.
- Hospitals and health-systems, along with ASHP, should partner with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and institutions with a high enrollment of BIPOC students to

encourage them to apply for IPPE, APPE, internship experiences, and other opportunities and experiences.

- Another benefit of partnership is to study issues surrounding BIPOC pharmacists and their impact on healthcare and patient outcomes, such as whether healthcare outcomes are improved for BIPOC patients if cared for by a BIPOC pharmacist.

Paul Abramowitz: Thank you, Paul, for doing a nice job of hitting the highlights. The enthusiastic dialog during the Town Hall at the Midyear, in addition to the numerous draft recommendations, underscores that education and training is of critical importance to our membership. The final focus area for preliminary recommendations is Advocacy, Marketing, and Communications. Tom, as ASHP President, I know you've had to explore new ways to communicate with members.

Tom Johnson: Absolutely. 2020 taught me—and all of us pharmacy professionals— the importance of communication and sharing vital information.

- These seven draft recommendations focus on just how important it is for ASHP to not only leverage things like the ASHP Official Podcast, AJHP commentaries, and articles to spotlight BIPOC ASHP members to share their perspectives, but to also position ASHP as an organization that is inclusive of BIPOC members.
- By conducting a media and communications campaign, we can address the value of ASHP membership, what ASHP stands for, and why ASHP is an association home for BIPOC ASHP members.
- In terms of advocacy, ASHP can weigh in on policy issues related to health disparities in the BIPOC community and partner with healthcare organizations, health-systems, HBCUs, and institutions with a high enrollment of BIPOC students with pharmacy schools/colleges to advance these policies.

Paul Abramowitz: Paul and Tom, any final thoughts for us as this Task Force is wrapping up its work?

Paul Walker: Thanks, Paul.

- It was an honor to work with this group of people and engage with the overall membership on this important topic.
- I really hope that these recommendations are just the beginning of our journey on this important work.
- I look forward to continuing to work with membership as we implement the recommendations.

Tom Johnson: I think Paul hit upon a very important point, which is that this a continuing process. I believe I speak for everyone on the Task Force by thanking ASHP members for their feedback and insight. We look forward to sustaining our commitment and work on diversity, equity, and inclusion into the future on issues facing BIPOC students, residents, technicians, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals.

Paul Abramowitz: Well, that's all we have time for today. Thanks, Tom and Paul, for joining me for this important discussion. Remember—you can read all of the preliminary recommendations on ashp.org. Join us next time for another episode of *The Pharmacy Playbook*, where Tom and I discuss initiatives and push the envelope as we explore cutting-edge pharmacy topics. Catch up on any episodes you may have missed on ASHPOfficial.

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