



# JSAFP

Achieving the Highest Standards of Practice



## **“Ready Medical Forces Through Agile Pharmacy Services”**

### **Society of Air Force Pharmacy Mid-Year Conference Recap**

**O**n May 2023, over 120 Air Force pharmacists and pharmacy technicians met in San Destin, FL for the annual Society of Air Force Pharmacy Midyear Conference. The event is held in a different location each year. The conference promotes the practice of Air Force pharmacy and serves as a networking opportunity for the different branches of the service. The conference was hosted by Eglin Air Force Base Pharmacy Team and held at the beautiful San Destin Golf and Beach Resort.

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From start to finish, the conference was an amazing experience that was packed with great lectures, face-to-face learning, networking, and partnership building. Education topics ranged from team building, pharmacological review of deployment medications, pharmacy law, Vancomycin dosing, and USP 797 updates. During the Tuesday evening of the conference, attendees enjoyed a sunset cruise dinner accompanied by a presentation discussing insights from the Navy on fostering trust, leading teams, and achieving organizational excellence, followed by the awards ceremony. The conference provided 17 hours of continuing education credit for both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, to include a Goose Chase Scavenger Hunt.



All conference attendees were randomly placed in groups of four or five for the three-day Goose Chase Scavenger Hunt. Many of the clues consisted of history and facts of the various vendors and team related photos. In between the lectures, the groups were working the clues and gaining points for the grand prize of a voucher for next year's conference registration fee. The winning team for the Goose Chase Scavenger Hunt was Major Nathaniel Goetz, Major Matthew Jordan, Capt Morgan Duval, and SrA Michaelle Ancho.

Thank you to the Society of Air Force Pharmacy, all attendees, our industry partners, Air Force leadership, and everyone that provided continuing education. We cannot wait to reveal next year's Society of Air Force Pharmacy Midyear Conference location.



Additional photos from the event are available for viewing [here](#).

## 2022 AWARD WINNERS

The Society was profoundly impressed by the overwhelming quantity and exceptional quality of this year's submissions. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who dedicated their time to acknowledge their teams and standout performers. Let's come together in celebrating our winners, whose names were revealed during this year's conference.

### Maxine Beatty Field Grade Pharmacy Officer of the Year

***Maj Brad Driscoll***

*Eielson AFB*

### Fred Coleman Company Grade Pharmacy Officer of the Year

***Capt Alexander Godwin***

*JB Langley AFB*

### Ed Zastawny Clinical Pharmacist of the Year

***Capt Mason Zhang***

*Travis AFB*

### Leadership and Innovation Award

***Capt Cody Morcom***

*Dover AFB*

### Michael Gambuti Junior Pharmacy Technician of the Year Award

***Capt Cody Morcom***

*Dover AFB*

### “Leadership Excellence” Intermediate Pharmacy Technician of the Year

***TSgt Marcus Hollins***

*JB San Antonio*

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# 2022 AWARD WINNERS

**“Leadership Excellence” Intermediate Pharmacy Technician of the Year**

***TSgt Marcus Hollins***

*JB San Antonio*

**“Leadership Pinnacle” Senior Pharmacy Technician of the Year**

***MSgt Jason Blas***

*RAF Lakenheath*

**Civilian Pharmacy Technician of the Year**

***Ms Nidra Bailey***

*Keesler AFB*

**SAFP Pharmacy Educator of the Year**

***TSgt Kenda Gallo***

*JB San Antonio*

**SAFP Small Team Award**

***Yokota AB***

**SAFP Medium Team Award**

***Seymour Johnson AFB***

**SAFP Large Team Award**

***JBSA - Lackland AFB***

# Life of Resiliency

*Christi Smith, Capt, USAF, PharmD, BSC*



In the military, we are always talking about resiliency. What is resiliency? It is defined as many different things. Macmillan Dictionary defines resiliency as becoming healthy or strong again or returning to the original shape. Everyday Health Website defines resiliency as the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from complex life events. Questions I always ask my airmen are what does resiliency mean to you? So, I am going to tell my life story of resiliency.

I've always dreamt of joining the military. When I graduated high school in 1999, I had plans to join the Navy. I thought it would be so fantastic to work on a ship! My dreams of joining the navy were sidelined when, against everyone's advice, I decided to follow my heart and marry my high school sweetheart. As in love as we were the pains of drug addiction, jealousy, insecurity, and abuse on behalf of my husband infiltrated our marriage. No matter how hard I tried the abuse escalated to domestic and sexual abuse at the hands of the man I loved. It took months before I could muster up the courage to stand up for myself when, during yet another horrific assault, I finally found the strength to fight back. Terrified, I took my future back into my own hands and was able to escape from my abuser to start a new life from scratch.

In 2000, I started work as a K-mart Health Beauty Aids Department Manager and quickly grew tired of being pulled around the store. I soon asked the District Manager to be transferred to the pharmacy; a move that changed my life completely. Not long after starting at the Pharmacy counter I was offered a second job at a Methadone Clinic. The extra experience was great but burn out from juggling multiple jobs and driving started to take its toll. Thankfully, I found a supportive full-time position that encouraged me to get my National and State Pharmacy Technician certification. While growing my professional skill set, I was fortunate to also find love again. In 2004 I met my husband of 14 years. My life seemed to be coming together; I had found a loving and supportive partner and was quickly climbing the corporate ladder working insurance reimbursements and becoming an assistant manager. Things seemed to be going perfect until my husband received his cancer diagnosis in 2005, only one year into our marriage. Undeterred, we worked through the cancer treatments and continued to build our life together. With his support I continued to excel professionally, navigating corporate changes, becoming a Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) program instructor, and earning my Senior Pharmacy Technician status. Yet, through it all, we found cancer was a constant companion. Throughout the next 13 years we battled his cancer with a revolving door of radiation and chemotherapy treatments. As dedicated as we were to beat his illness the cancer was relentless as periods of remission seemed to get shorter and shorter with each new diagnosis.

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By 2013, my husband was undergoing weekly treatments. It was crushing to see him go through difficult surgeries, high-powered chemotherapy treatments, and emergency interventions. The mental and emotional gymnastics bouncing between being a wife, caregiver, and working professional was exhausting. By the time he required weekly treatments it had become painfully clear that I would soon be on my own. It was a horrible reality to face but once we accepted that our time together was getting short it opened up the discussion for us to talk about what I could do to create a stable life for myself when he was gone. I told him about my desire to take prerequisites for Pharmacy School at Tri-County Technical College. It was hard to imagine taking on the stressors of school while working full-time

and caring for my ailing, husband but with his full support I signed up for Pharmacy School prerequisites for fall 2013. In all the stress of my life at the time I coped by throwing myself into my new profession. By becoming a part of the college Pharmacy Advisory Board, serving as a representative of the student body and meeting with Pharmacy school representatives twice a year. All my extra effort paid off when, after 2-years of pre-requisites, I was officially accepted into the South University School of Pharmacy.

At university I threw myself into my studies, determined to succeed as a student, wife, and caregiver, but my husband's condition was progressively getting worse, and the years of treatments were starting to affect his ability to think rationally. Despite advice from classmates to take a year off I continued to pursue my courses. In all the stress that was surrounding me I felt the need to prove to myself that I could do it all. I continued the entire first year of school juggling my many hats until one evening when my husband's irrational and erratic behavior went too far. In late 2017, I had a rough day thinking I failed a final exam. Upset and stressed I tried to focus on preparing for my next exam when my husband pulled a gun on me. After years of support and sacrifice I found myself staring down the barrel of a gun in my own home. I was able to deescalate the situation but could no longer relax or trust that he wouldn't try to hurt me again in the future. Knowing his time was getting short we arranged for him to be close to his oncologist so he would have easier access to his treatments and care. A few short months later, in May 2018, I received the call that he had passed away.



One year away from graduation, I found myself newly widowed and alone while trying to prepare for my life after school. While filling out residency applications I came across an email about the Air Force Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP).

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In my mind I knew this could be my second chance to join the military and be a part of something bigger. My recruiter called a week before Thanksgiving 2018 to tell me I was accepted into the Air Force HPSP. My whole life turned around and I knew joining the Air Force would give me a fresh start. I graduated from pharmacy school and was commissioned by one of my professors, a Retired Army Colonel, in June 2019.

By 2020 I was living my dream as an active-duty Airman working a job I loved. Navigating COVID-19 pandemic operations was the primary focus at the time, but I started to notice an odd bump on my right forearm. Due to pandemic limitations, procedures weren't regularly performed so removal of the cyst-like bump was delayed for months. When the results

finally came back four weeks later, I was diagnosed with Desmoplastic Melanoma skin cancer. Cancer tried its best to derail my life plans for the past 14 years and I was determined to not let it take hold of my life again. Within three months I underwent three surgeries and a skin graft to get quick control of the cancer spread. The stress of the diagnosis and multiple operations started to take their toll. I could handle the physical scars (affectionally referred to as my 'shark bite') but mentally I was at a new low. My fitness hit rock bottom, I started gaining weight and my motivation was lacking. When the provider cleared me to start exercising, I took a long hard look at how far I had come and re-committed myself to getting control of my life again. I increased my stamina and endurance with muscle resistance and cardio training for approximately two hours daily. By the end of 2021, I ran four half marathons and one full marathon. The way I thought about this part of my life is that God knew I could handle it and was using me to help others overcome their challenges. In my heart, I knew every bad thing that had happened in my life had made me stronger and stronger.



In June 2022, I PCSed from Ellsworth AFB, SD, to Minot AFB, ND. As the sole pharmacist for approximately six-months were adjusting to the new workload and mission set became a challenge. Over time I grew more comfortable navigating the unique needs of Minot and was looking forward to my first North Dakota winter. I was so excited to hook up my snowplow to the winch (a mechanical device used to adjust the tension of a cable/rope) of my ATV I failed to recognize how dangerously close my hand was to the winch

rollers. In a flash my hand was pulled into the roller and my finger was amputated at the second knuckle. Instinctively, my military training kicked in and I immediately applied Self-Aid Buddy Care actions to my damaged hand while instructing 911 to my location. After my emergency surgery I did my best to rest, but just like previous trials I often found it helpful to keep busy when processing stress and trauma. The day after surgery I shoveled the snow off my large back porch with my 'good' hand and within a week was back working on my ATV winch to plow the snow on my driveway.

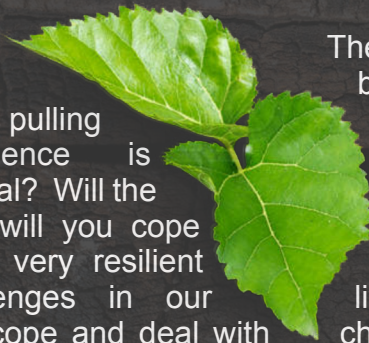


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I returned to work the following week to make sure my staff and patients were okay and assure them that I was healthy and healing. Though the physical stress and damage of the accident healed the mental scars from the event took months to resolve. After throwing myself into my work in an attempt to get past the trauma of the amputation, my body eventually hit a wall. I had exhausted myself to the point that my body had given up. After years of focusing on the needs of others my body took control and forced me to stop and focus on myself. This time I listened. I rested at home and took time to re-focus on working out, eating right, and enjoying quiet time at home with family.

I eventually reached out and spoke to someone about the stress stemming from the accident and set up new goals for myself to ensure a better work-life balance. After all these changes I feel I have bounced back to be a stronger, better, balanced and more resilient version of myself.

starts pulling  
Resilience is  
normal? Will the  
how will you cope  
been very resilient  
challenges in our  
you cope and deal with



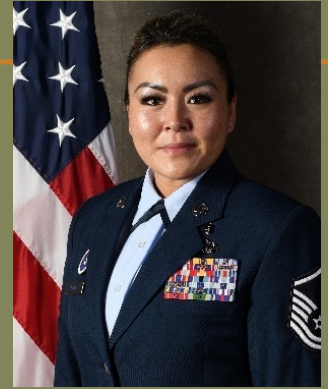
There are many synonyms for resiliency. Toughness, strength, and buoyancy are only a few words describing resilience. When life you down, ask yourself what you will do to come out on top. defined in many ways; how will you bounce back or return to change be a new normal to adapt to the new environment, or with whatever you may be going through? Ultimately, I have to the obstacles in my life. We are all different in dealing with lives. I am leaving a question for all who read this article. How do challenges in your life, and what will you do to be resilient?

## ***Keep Moving Forward***



# Battling Burnout and Achieving Work-Life Balance

*Kierra Lee Franks, MSgt, USAF*



Exhausted? Unmotivated? Discouraged? Some of these overwhelming feelings are strong indicators of personal burnout often experienced by military members serving in the Armed Forces. After the relentless demand for medical professionals at the height of Coronavirus, our Medical Corps has carried the burden of being overworked and undermanned for years. While the workload may not lighten; finding harmony between work/service and your personal life for yourself, your family, and your teams is essential in overcoming the daily stressors that accumulate as being part of the Military Medical Profession. On my own personal journey to achieving work-life balance, I have adopted several overarching principles to maintain my sanity and continue to support my teams in executing the mission. These ideas include transparency, communication, efficiency in effort, and continuous evaluation.

## **Transparency**

Transparency starts with yourself. Being honest with your goals, aspirations, capabilities, and bandwidth sets a foundation of where you are versus where you want to be, need to be, or should be. Transparency then crosses over to your family, your supervisor, your leadership, and your teams. Being on the same page as those who surround you helps to alleviate obstacles and conflict. Working together as a community and team toward a common cause can help reach goals more quickly and effectively.

## **Communication**

Once you've identified your goals, it's important to communicate them, not only to see them come to fruition but so that your support teams fully understand your intentions and deliberate actions that are taking place to establish routines and sustainable schedules. Communication is vital to expectation management. Life and work demands may not always be in perfect harmony, but if channels of communication are open with your family and teams, discussing harder or more stressful periods can help everyone be mindful and stay focused on the desired outcomes. During harder times, it's also important to communicate boundaries so that you can continue to effectively perform, but not past a breaking point.

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## ***Efficiency in Effort***

When things keep piling up on your plate, it is hard to reach or even see an end goal at times. Making intentional efforts towards the things you must do while simultaneously chipping away at the things you want to achieve has been an effective method, which I've used in reaching a sustainable work-life balance. I spend 80% of my day doing the things I absolutely have to do, such as evaluations, deployment preparation/planning, training, and squadron operations. But I also dedicate 20% of my day towards long-term goals and tasks, which may take longer or be more time-consuming to accomplish. Synchronizing these efforts makes me as productive as possible at work so that I can focus on my family and myself outside of duty hours and not feel overwhelmed by everything waiting back at the office.

## ***Continuous Evaluation***

Now that your journey to work-life balance has been outlined, it should be a cakewalk, right? Certainly not, but nothing worthwhile is ever easy. Continuously re-evaluating where you are and the path to where you are going is vital to maintaining your balance and sanity along the way. Work obligations will ebb, and flow. Family and personal life can always be a whirlwind. Always checking in with your front row at home and at work can help you navigate the demands of both and harmonize the time you have between the two.



# JOIN SAFP

Society of Air Force Pharmacy



**1 Continuing Education:** Live and virtual meetings provide CE hours you need to maintain your pharmacy licensure.

**2 Meetings and Events:** Annual meetings and events are a great environment for networking.

**3 Volunteer Opportunities:** SAFP offers numerous ways for members to get involved in projects, committees, or events in the pharmacy community.

**4 Journal Articles:** Members will have access to our journal and see how pharmacy impacts the mission worldwide.

**5 Reimbursement Program:** SAFP is now offering certificate program reimbursement for members!

**Free First Year Membership for DoD-Affiliated Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacists**



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