



UMB News

UMB Students Roll Up Sleeves, Administer Vaccines

January 15, 2021 | By [Mary Therese Phelan](#)

With a look of intense concentration, **Amy Chen**, a fourth-year student at the [University of Maryland School of Pharmacy \(UMSOP\)](#), gently pierced the skin of the upper arm of **Jane M. Kirschling, PhD, RN, FAAN**, thus administering to the dean of the [University of Maryland School of Nursing \(UMSON\)](#) her first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.



The scene was among numerous similar scenarios played out at the [Southern Management Corporation \(SMC\) Campus Center](#), where officials from the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC), the University of Maryland Medical System, and the [University of Maryland, Baltimore \(UMB\)](#) have established a fully operational clinic for health care workers and other front-line personnel to receive

Jane M. Kirschling, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean of the University of Maryland School of Nursing, receives her first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine from University of Maryland School of Pharmacy student Amy Chen at the clinic established at the SMC Campus Center.

vaccinations against COVID-19.

Students from UMSOP and

UMSON have volunteered to administer vaccines, fulfilling a need to help during the pandemic while gaining valuable hands-on experience.

"I volunteered because I wanted to help fight COVID. I feel like what I am doing matters," said Chen, who at the time was unaware of her patient's role at UMB. "Had I known, I would have been a little nervous."

Alex Clyde, another UMSOP student, said she volunteered because doing so means saving lives. Pharmacy students participating in the clinic completed online trainings and received immunization certification as part of their normal studies.

"This has obviously been a life-altering experience," Clyde said. "I definitely know people who have suffered a lot from everything that's going on. So, the fact that we can finally kind of see an end is really enlightening and gratifying. I think most people get into health care with just the idea of helping people. And this, for me, has been the best way to help people."

She has an upcoming appointment to receive the vaccine herself, and when she does, she will be thinking of a beloved family member who passed away in April of COVID-19. "I'm getting my shot for my uncle," Clyde said.

Volunteering for the vaccination clinic was an easy decision for fellow pharmacy student **Ryan Jackson**. Both of his grandparents are suffering from COVID-19.

"Whenever they need volunteers to stop a disease, or to stop spread of a disease that is affecting so many, I think we're definitely helping," Jackson said.

Magaly Rodriguez de Bittner, PharmD, BCPS, CDE, FAPhA, professor and chair of the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Science at UMSOP, received her first dose of the vaccine from one of her students, **Jemini Patel**.

"I'm delighted. I've been wanting to get it for a long time," Rodriguez de Bittner said. "Secondly, I'm delighted that I've been able to get the vaccine by one of my student pharmacists and really highlight what an important role pharmacists have in public health. For us, it's really very important to see how by having that training, the students are ready, capable, and able to really provide vaccines and improve public health."

Rodriguez de Bittner also was eager to get vaccinated because she welcomed two new grandchildren in 2020.

Getting vaccinated, she said, "provides me an opportunity to be there for them, to spend time with them."

The instructor beamed with pride after Patel gave her the shot.

"She followed all the steps that we teach them," Rodriguez de Bittner said. "And the other thing is I really, honest to God, did not feel it. So it was very painless. It was very easy, very, very smooth."

Said Patel, "She has taught me the technique, so it's truly a test on how I do. Yes, I was a little nervous but I have had practice and I am comfortable giving vaccines."

Patel said she participated in the clinic because it was a good opportunity to serve her university community. She received the vaccination earlier in the week. "I was very eager to get the vaccine. My parents are elderly," she said.

Cherokee Layson-Wolf, PharmD, BCACP, FAPhA, associate dean for student affairs and associate professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Science at UMSOP, said the school's leadership collaborated with UMMC to assist in staffing the SMC Campus Center clinic.

“Our students are trained at the end of their second year, so we’ve been fortunate to be able to place fourth-year pharmacy students here as immunizers within the SMC clinic,” Layson-Wolf said. “This is a monumental experience for our students to really be involved on this large level to help impact public health. And this is what our students have been trained for.

“We feel so strongly about the role of pharmacists in immunizations that we do provide this training to our students earlier on. So they’re able to do this when they’re on rotations when they’re at work and here on rotation through this clinic, and they’re really able to help increase the throughput of the number of people that are able to be immunized on this campus.”

Layson-Wolf said she had been vaccinated earlier in the week.

“I got the shot for many reasons, to help protect myself and my family,” she said. “And I think folks in these health care roles need to serve as role models, to be able to say, ‘I believe in this vaccine. I believe that this has impact on my community.’ ”

Kelly Doss, a student in UMSO’s Clinical Nurse Leader program, also welcomed the chance to be part of the clinic.

“I’m excited to be part of this and very, very happy to have this opportunity,” she said. “They were hinting at it for a while with emails from the School of Nursing, and when I learned this is actually happening, I was very happy.”

As excited as Doss was to be part of the vaccination process, Kirschling was appreciative for the hands-on learning students are receiving.

“I’m extremely grateful for the partnership between the medical center, the medical system, and UMB in terms of making this a reality. Not only for our employees, but for students, it is extremely important,” Kirschling said. “We have 2,000 nursing students at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and our undergraduate and graduate students and their ability to pull together and to participate in the vaccination process is important, and will help us get it done sooner.”

Kirschling said she was eager to get the vaccine and is completing the approval process for becoming a vaccine administrator.

“We all need to do our part in terms of fighting the pandemic, and we have a number of tools that we can use — hand washing, social distancing, masking. Vaccines are another tool to help us get through this pandemic sooner than later,” she said. “It’s important that we all pull together right now and meet this unbelievable need to have people who can provide vaccinations to those who are willing to take the vaccine.”

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