

CANDIDATE BIO

Sonak Pastakia, PharmD, MPH, BCPS – Associate Professor Purdue University College of Pharmacy

Dr. Sonak Pastakia, Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice at the Purdue University College of Pharmacy (West Lafayette, Indiana, USA), is a public health pharmacist based in Eldoret, Kenya full time where he focuses his efforts on addressing the needs of marginalized populations residing throughout rural western Kenya. Within the Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH) program, Dr. Pastakia serves key roles including being one of the leaders of the Chronic Disease Management program (focused on diabetes and hypertension), co-chair of the Pharmacy Working Group, lead North American implementer of the anticoagulation management program, Principal Investigator on a nationwide counterfeit detection program, and a board member for a street children's drop-in center. Through his participation in the AMPATH program, he has helped AMPATH transition from an HIV-focused program to a comprehensive program focusing on the myriad health and societal issues faced by rural, resource-constrained patients in western Kenya.

In AMPATH's definition of "healthcare," the focus is on the patient, not the disease. If a patient is hungry, or without a job, or is the victim of discrimination or abuse, AMPATH will respond, a commitment that leads inexorably toward holistic care. Therefore, AMPATH not only treats over 140,000 HIV-positive persons at more than 500 urban and rural clinic sites throughout western Kenya (population, ~3.5 million). They provide school fees, nutrition, and other assistance to more than 20,000 children left orphaned or vulnerable due to HIV/AIDS and have enrolled more than 10,000 patients in income security programs, including agricultural extension services, micro-finance, and small business initiatives. They also conduct prevention and early treatment programs, demonstrating that a community-based effort can virtually halt the spread of HIV/AIDS alongside other chronic diseases.

Through the Purdue Kenya Program, Dr. Pastakia and his colleagues proudly espouse all of these values and have focused all of their activities on addressing the local healthcare system barriers that prevent the dissemination of high-quality care in this setting. To maximize the patient level impact of their activities, they broadened their scope of practice beyond the traditional dispensing role to include typically overlooked determinants of health. To accomplish this, they embarked on a tripartite mission focused primarily on care but also incorporating education to train the future generation of global health leaders in addition to research to ensure they are providing the highest level of care possible. Several key initiatives designed to uphold their tripartite mission include a first-of-its-kind global health residency exchange program where North American pharmacy residents are partnered with Kenyan pharmacy residents on site in Kenya, a novel revolving fund pharmacy program to ensure rural patients have continued and sustained access to essential medications, a chronic disease management program where patients have avenues for prevention and care for rapidly emerging conditions like diabetes and hypertension, peer-based adherence support to maximize the benefits of treatment, and rehabilitation program designed to provide opportunities to help street children permanently break the poverty cycle and leave life on the streets behind. Furthermore, through their longstanding collaborations with local providers, they have built all of these models to be sustainable in the long-term by decreasing continued dependence on outside donors and increasing reliance on local patients and providers.

Through Dr. Pastakia's unique position as an Associate Professor at Purdue University, he spends 10-11 months per year on site in Kenya. Over the past 6 years in Kenya, he has focused on implementing a wide variety of programs alongside his Kenyan colleagues, including a rural diabetes care program (which has served more than 4,000 patients and screened more than 20,000 people), a pharmacy distribution system that provides antiretroviral medications to more than 140,000 HIV-infected patients receiving care at 55 satellite clinics throughout western Kenya, and an anticoagulation monitoring program which serves over 800 patients and has a focus on rheumatic heart disease. Through his position with the Purdue University College of Pharmacy, he is also responsible for precepting 20 to 30 Purdue students and 10 Nairobi pharmacy students each year. It is within this capacity that he has also served as a research mentor for students and supervised more than 30 student-led research projects, which have resulted in more than 20 poster presentations and 20 published manuscripts. He also serves as a consultant to Abbott, guiding the implementation of market-based solutions to improve access to care for rural, resource-constrained populations throughout India. His outstanding work at the interface of public health and pharmacy has led to significant international recognition and multiple awards, including the American Society of Health Systems Best Practices Award for Implementation of Pharmacy Practice in a Rural, Resource-constrained setting (2010), American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP) Student Community Engaged Service Awards (2010), the Indiana Public Health Foundation Preventive Medicine and Public Health Award (2012), and the Purdue University Corps of Engagement Award (2013).