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# **AACP News**

*American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy*

*Volume 37, Number 3, March 2006*

# UW Receives Bioterrorism and Emergency Preparedness Grant

The University of Washington (UW) School of Pharmacy received a grant from the Health Services Resources Administration (HRSA) to train students in bioterrorism and public health emergency preparedness.

“It is important that pharmacy students and other students within health sciences schools receive training on how to best prepare for and respond to public health emergencies, such as bioterrorism, emerging infections or natural disasters,” said Andy S. Stergachis, Ph.D., professor of epidemiology and adjunct professor of pharmacy.

The three-year \$559,000 grant was one of 13 curriculum development grants allocated by HRSA’s Bioterrorism Training and Curriculum Development Program (BTCDP). The goal of the BTCDP is to develop a national health care workforce

with the knowledge, skills, abilities and core competencies to recognize indications of a terrorist event and treat patients and communities swiftly, safely and effectively.

The UW School of Pharmacy will use these funds to further develop, implement and evaluate a multidisciplinary curriculum in bioterrorism and public health emergency preparedness that provides pharmacy and other regional health care students at the University of Washington Academic Health Center as well as those at Washington State University (WSU) College of Pharmacy with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize signs of a hazardous event, meet the acute care needs of patients, and work in a coordinated, multidisciplinary manner in responding to public health emergencies at the community, state and national level.

According to UW, pharmacists boast an

extensive infrastructure of 55,000 community pharmacies and 11,000 hospital and health-system pharmacies nationwide. “Should emergencies arise,” explains Stergachis, “whether urban or rural area, there is usually a pharmacy and one or more pharmacists within five miles of nearly every American household.”

Pharmacists play an indispensable role in securing the nation’s health in the wake of natural disasters. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, pharmacist assistance was sorely needed in the areas affected by the hurricane as well as states sheltering victims. The Office of the Surgeon General and the Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness put out an urgent call for pharmacist volunteers to assist in Hurricane relief efforts. Over a thousand pharmacists volunteered their time and knowledge to help in the relief.