

**A Brief History of the Department of Defense Annual Pharmacy Meetings:
The Transformation from Service Specific to Combined Forces Pharmacy Seminar
to the Joint Forces Pharmacy Seminar**

**by
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Department of Defense Pharmacy and its dedicated pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have a proud tradition of selfless service performed with duty and honor in providing excellence in pharmaceutical care and service to soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and all patients whom they serve.

Joint mission planning, coordination, and implementation have always been the norm within DoD Pharmacy among Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in networking, and sharing lessons learned and best practices—always focused on appropriate and safe drug therapy for all patients. An outstanding example of such service collaboration and partnership has been the Combined Forces Pharmacy Seminar (CFPS), which in 1994 became the professional conference for the Quad Service pharmacy community. Prior to 1994, each service held an annual service-unique pharmacy meeting, alternating between a variety of meeting locations and focusing primarily on military pharmacy operational and clinical issues and challenges.

Then in 1994, due to a combination of factors, senior service pharmacy leadership made a decision to combine the annual meetings into one. That first Combined Forces Pharmacy Seminar was held in San Antonio, Texas. A primary reason cited by DoD pharmacy leadership that led to the “combined” meeting was meeting planning efficiency and conservation of conference planning resources. Additionally, the Army’s Pharmacoeconomic Center (PEC) had appropriately evolved to a broader DoD focus. Thus it was believed that the time was right for combining the service meetings with an objective of educating and informing about policies, and discussing the delivery of consistent, cost-effective, and uniform pharmacy services and policies throughout the entire military health system (MHS). This first combined service conference had no theme; however, in 1995 the Navy-led meeting selected as its theme, “The Changing Face of Pharmacy.” Each subsequent year (with the exception of 1998), a conference theme was selected. The conference continued to grow in terms of popularity, and in 1996 with a theme of "Carpe Futurum — Seize the Future," the meeting attendance documented a record 751 participants, offering 22.5 hours of ACPE-accredited continuing education.

In addition to active duty military pharmacists and technicians, the CFPS appropriately invited and included other DoD Pharmacy Team members to include pharmacists from the Reserves and National Guard, and civilian pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who serve in DoD health care facilities worldwide. CPFS quickly became the largest annual gathering of federal pharmacy professionals, pharmacists, and technicians. Because of the size and scope of planning responsibilities, the DoD Pharmacy Board of Directors decided to partner with a national organization/agency that had meeting planning experience. This was in addition to a Tri-Service planning committee being

designated to lead the overall planning effort. The Association of Military Surgeons of the U.S. (AMSUS) was selected to assist in the conference coordination in 1994, which continued through 1999. The TRUE Research Foundation then became the coordinating organization in 2000, which continued through the 2004 CFPS. Then in 2005, the American Pharmacists Association was unanimously selected to partner with DoD Pharmacy as its official CFPS coordinating organization, which is currently scheduled to continue through 2010.

This seminar has grown since its first meeting in 1994 and continues to grow to record numbers of attendees, which in 2006 surpassed 1,200. Several conference “firsts” include breakout sessions and poster presentations in 1997, the first annual “fun run” in 1999, the first service challenge coins tradition began in 2002, and in 2005, all poster abstracts published in the *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association (JAPhA)*. Additionally, over the years, the services have added annual award recognition programs to honor those among them who have excelled in service and the provision of pharmaceutical care. These include the Army’s Ralph D. Arnold Award Banquet, the Navy’s Lamar Smith Award Banquet, the Air Force’s Jerry Ross Awards Banquet and, beginning in 2006, the Coast Guard Awards Banquet. In 2008 the Coast Guard Service Dinner became the Mary Fong-Rodriquez Awards Banquet.

Another milestone was reached with the 2007 name change from the Combined Forces Pharmacy Seminar (CFPS) to the Joint Forces Pharmacy Seminar (JFPS), which was held in Anaheim, California

Table 1 provides a synopsis of key facts and information documenting the milestones and evolution of the annual DoD Pharmacy meeting from the first CFPS in 1994 to the upcoming JFPS.

DoD pharmacy leadership prior to 1994 laid the foundations for the initial Combined Forces Pharmacy Seminars and the Joint Forces Pharmacy Seminar of today, which has now evolved into the major national pharmacy meeting for DoD pharmacists. This annual professional seminar is a valuable asset to the DoD pharmacy community and is largely responsible for helping to achieve Tri-Service collaboration, in addition to being a primary facilitator of pharmacy becoming a leader in DoD, with the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard coming together to solve common issues. What began as the concept of a needed cross-service networking opportunity with the first CFPS in 1994 and transformed to JFPS in 2007 will continue as a national model for DoD and other professional meetings in creating a learning environment where attendees meet annually to network, share experiences, and learn new innovative solutions to challenges facing DoD pharmacy today and in the future.

Table 1. CFPS/JFPS Key Facts

Location	Dates	Conference Theme	Coordinating Agency & Comments
San Antonio, TX St. Anthony Hotel	Mar 27-Apr 1, 1994	No Conference Theme	AMSUS/Army
Jacksonville, FL Omni Hotel	Apr 30-May 5, 1995	“The Changing Face of Pharmacy”	AMSUS/Navy
San Antonio, TX Municipal Auditorium	Apr 1-5, 1996	“Carpe Futurum — Seize the Future”	AMSUS/Army
Dallas, TX Hyatt Regency DFW	Apr 20-25, 1997	“Partners in Pharmaceutical Care, An Exciting Era of Joint-Service Endeavors”	AMSUS/Air Force: First Breakout and Poster Sessions Society of Air Force Pharmacist Awards Banquet became the “Jerry W. Ross Pharmacy Awards Banquet.”
San Diego, CA Town and Country Resort and Convention Center	Mar 15-19, 1998	No Conference Theme	AMSUS/Navy
Kansas City, MO Hyatt Regency Crown Center	Mar 28-Apr 2, 1999	“Meeting the Pharmaceutical Care Challenges for the 21 st Century”	AMSUS/Army: First Annual Fun Run
Biloxi, MS Beau Rivage Resort	Apr 16-21, 2000	“Navigating the Changing Tides of Pharmaceutical Care”	TRUE Research Foundation/Air Force
Orlando, FL	Oct 29-Nov 2, 2001	“Celebrating DoD Pharmacy’s Role in Improving Fitness, Prevention and Military Readiness”	TRUE Research Foundation: First Year of Tri-Service Planning Committee
Atlanta, GA Hilton Hotel	Oct 21-24, 2002	DoD Pharmacy: “Gateway to Readiness, Patient Safety and Homeland Defense”	TRUE: First Challenge Coin
Nashville, TN Opryland Hotel	Oct 19-23, 2003	DoD Pharmacy: “Sounding the Call for Excellence Mission, One...Healthcare Readiness”	TRUE
Kansas City, MO Westin Crown Center	Oct 25-28, 2004	DoD Pharmacy: “Progressive Healthcare for our Nation’s Finest, Best Practices Peace and War”	TRUE

San Diego, CA Town and Country Resort and Convention Center	Oct 23-25, 2005	DoD Pharmacy: “Always Watchful in Patient Care”	APhA/Poster Abstracts published in <i>JAPhA</i>
Atlanta, GA Hilton Hotel	Oct 23-26, 2006	DoD Pharmacy: “Transforming THE Unified Patient Care”	APhA
Anaheim, CA Marriott Hotel and Anaheim Convention Center	Oct 29-Nov 1, 2007	Joint Forces Pharmacy: “Innovative Culture, Excellence Delivered”	APhA: Name changed to Joint Forces Pharmacy Seminar (JFPS)
Louisville, KY Galt House Hotel and Kentucky International Convention Center	Nov 3-6, 2008	Joint Forces Pharmacy: “Lengths Ahead in the Race to Wellness”	APhA: Coast Guard Awards Banquet will become the “Mary Fong- Rodriquez Awards Banquet”
Reno, NV Grand Sierra Resort	Oct 26-29, 2009	Joint Forces Pharmacy: “Celebrating 15 Little Years of BIG Pharmacy Service”	APhA: Special focus and celebration of 15 years of joint forces pharmacy programs