BOOK REVIEWS

Buerki RA, Vottero LD. *Pharmacy Ethics: A Foundation for Professional Practice*. Washington, DC: American Pharmacists Association; 2013, 210 pp, \$39.95 (softcover), ISBN 9781582121796.

Reviewed By: David M. Baker, BS Pharm, MBA, JD
Western New England University College of Pharmacy,
Springfield, Massachusetts

Pharmacy Ethics: A Foundation for Professional Practice is a paperback book directed at pharmacy students that provides a concise, yet comprehensive, guide to ethical decision-making, the Code of Ethics for Pharmacists, and the practical application of ethics to pharmacy practice. This is the fourth book on ethics for pharmacists written by the experienced team of Robert Buerki and Louis Vottero, both professor emeriti of their respective institutions.¹⁻³ When compared to their prior works, this latest offering has evolved in some ways and remained the same in others. The end result is a textbook that can be very helpful in guiding pharmacy students through the intricate maze of ethical dilemmas they may face as future practitioners.

One of the consistencies among their texts is the authors' devotion to and explanation of the relevance of the Code of Ethics for Pharmacists to the modern practice of pharmacy. The first chapter is devoted to how the American pharmacy profession developed its ethics, reviewing each of the successive pharmacy codes of ethics that were promulgated in the United States. In the second chapter the current Code of Ethics for Pharmacists is explained in the context of modern day practice and includes a few ethical situations for further discussion. Moving from the specific code to general principles, the third chapter presents the basics of ethical decision-making and how traditional ethical theories are applicable to the pharmacy profession, again presenting some scenarios for thought. By providing the history and current application of the code of ethics as well as basic ethical theories, the authors provide a foundation upon which pharmacy students can build their own ethical standards.

A second consistency noted is the authors' presentation of their 4-step ethical dilemma-solving process—a simple yet thorough and effective process. The fourth chapter delineates the 4 steps of the process and provides a situation for each step to allow students the opportunity to practice each step. Thus, in the first 4 chapters, the authors provide both the foundation and the tools by

which a student of pharmacy can approach ethical practice dilemmas.

Through the remainder of the book the authors present various aspects of pharmacy practice in which the role of ethics is significant; subject matter that the authors continue to better delineate and update since their prior texts. The areas covered in the succeeding chapters are: the pharmacist-patient relationship, professional communications, prescription and nonprescription drug distribution, contemporary practice, and emerging practice concerns. Within each chapter, issues are raised, applicable Code or ethical principles are reviewed, and, with the exception of the last chapter, situational cases are presented with commentary. The final chapters provide the students with practical experience in dealing with both current and emerging practice-based ethical dilemmas.

Only 2 shortcomings in the book chapters were noted, both of which are more of a bothersome nature than a serious detractor to the work. First, a few of the case scenarios presented are dated, ie, present factual situations that cannot occur because of changes in law or practice. Instructor-created cases can easily be substituted to resolve these few situations. Second, the last chapter, concerning emerging concerns of practice, has reflection questions instead of case scenarios with commentary. However, the questions should have a similar effect on class discussion, and again, case scenarios can easily be instructor-created and substituted. Clearly, these shortcomings are not insurmountable and do not detract significantly from the content of the text.

Finally, to ignore what follows the book chapters would be an injustice to the book's proper review. Before the comprehensive index at the end of the book is a 15-page glossary of terms derived from various sources, which are both informative and useful to students studying pharmacy ethics. Using the glossary, while reading the text, will enlighten and broaden students' understanding of the multitude of ethical issues that may confront them while engaged in pharmacy practice.

Pharmacy Ethics: A Foundation for Professional Practice is an excellent addition to the small armamentarium of pharmacy ethics literature available for use by academics in teaching pharmacy students. The text covers the gamut of pharmacy ethics: the history of pharmacy's codes of ethics, interpretation of the current code, the general principles underlying pharmacy ethics, an ethical problem-solving process, coverage of the common sources of pharmacy ethical dilemmas, and application of the ethical principles to those dilemmas. As a course textbook, it should prove quite useful in pharmacy ethics

courses, as well as in other pharmacy courses in which ethical issues may arise.

REFERENCES

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Corresponding Author: David M. Baker, BSPharm, MBA, JD. Western New England University College of Pharmacy, 1215 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01119. Tel: 413-796-2412. Fax: 413-796-2266. E-mail: dmbaker@wne.edu