

Starting an Interprofessional PSO Chapter as a Distance Student

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BACKGROUND

According to the CDC, cancer has become the second leading cause of death in the US. Often, new practitioners' exposure to the oncology setting is limited during their professional degree education.

Creighton has a large health sciences program including Pharmacy, Dental, Medicine, Nursing, Occupational Therapy (OT), and Physical Therapy (PT) on the Omaha campus as well as Pharmacy, Medicine, Nursing, OT, and PT on the Phoenix campus. We also have OT programs in Anchorage and Denver as well as the Distance Pathway in our Pharmacy program that allows students from all over the country to participate in our program from home.

By starting a National Community Oncology Dispensing Association (NCODA) – Professional Student Organization (PSO) as an interprofessional organization at Creighton University, it allows students the opportunity to experience a deeper understanding of their role in the oncology setting and access to current professionals in the field.

By creating an interprofessional space for everyone to work together as a team, this allows students the opportunity to practice communicating with other professionals that they will encounter during their careers in oncology.

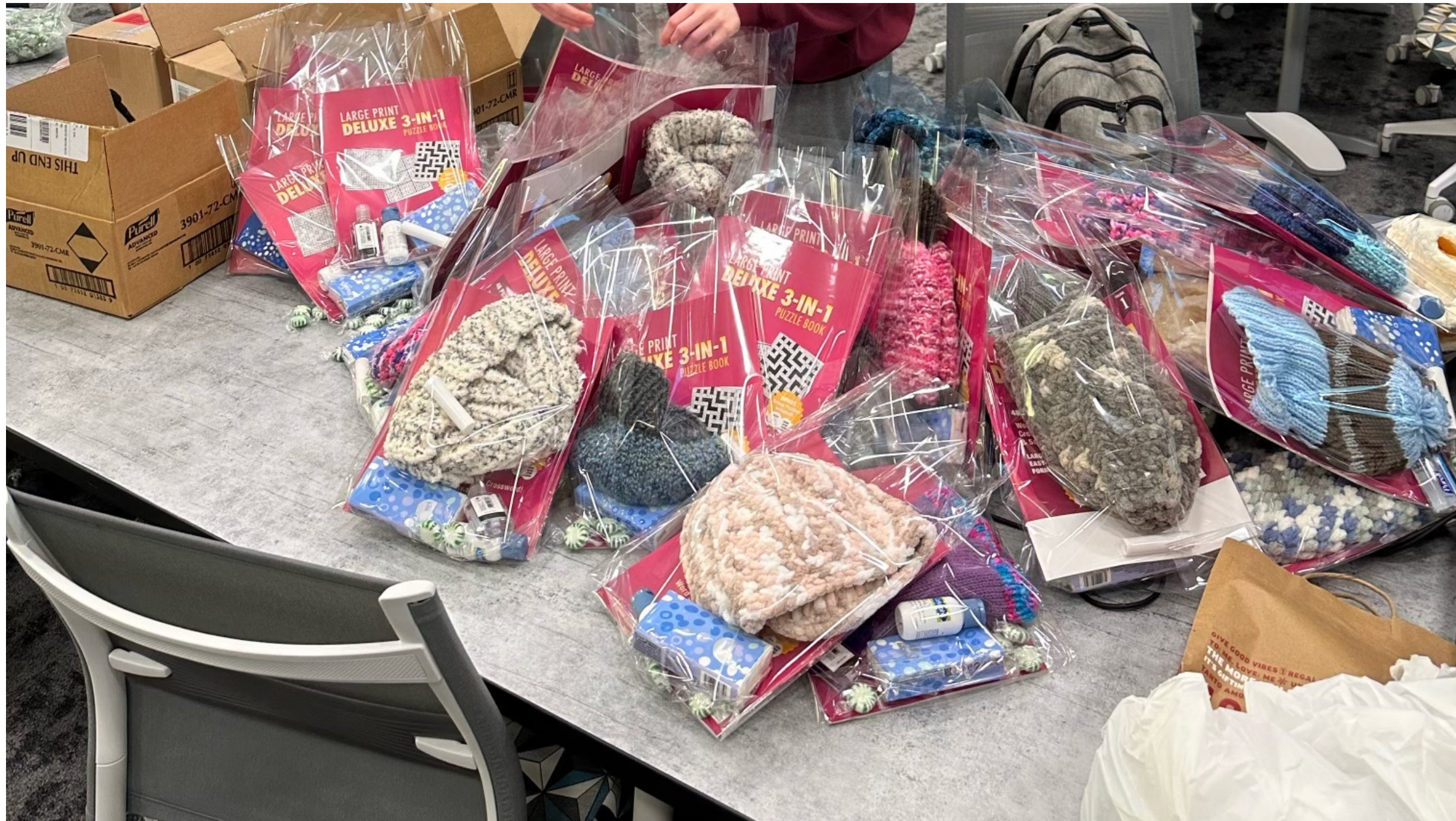
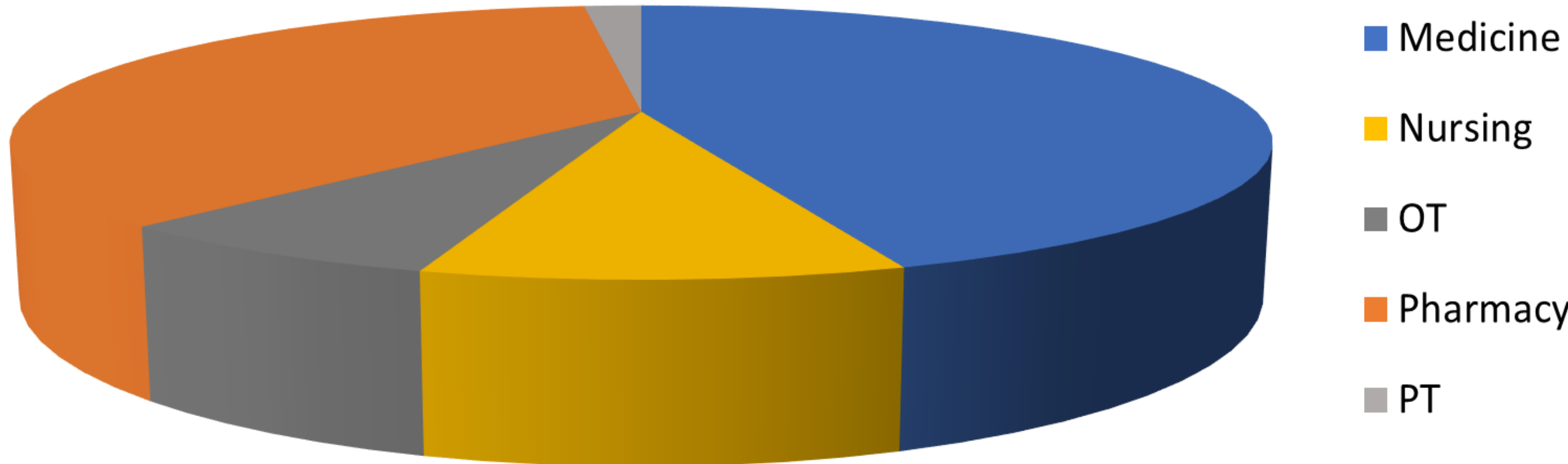
OBJECTIVE

- To introduce healthcare students who are interested in oncology to professionals already working in the field
- To bring together students from all health science disciplines to begin working together as a team before they graduate
- To bring oncology to the campuses of Creighton University in Omaha, NE; Phoenix, AZ; Denver, CO; and Anchorage, AK
- To include Creighton University's Pharmacy program Distance students in helping patients across the country

METHODS

- We sought counsel from Creighton University faculty regarding an oncology organization.
- We contacted students from all health professions programs via email to survey their interest in an oncology interprofessional organization.
- We then contacted all health professions programs via email to announce the new organization and available leadership positions.
- We hosted several monthly meetings with oncology professionals to help students gain knowledge in oncology.
- We sent out opportunities for all students, including those students on the Omaha campus, to participate in service events serving oncology patients.

Creighton University NCODA-PSO
Membership by Professional School



DISCUSSION

As a first-year pharmacy student in Minneapolis, MN, who had worked in oncology for several years, I knew that I wanted to join an oncology organization. Upon starting at Creighton University, I found no oncology organizations still active on campus. Students could not participate in events and activities to get them ready for a career in oncology as they moved into practice. I immediately reached out to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in our program and asked how I could bring an organization to campus for all health science students.

After learning the process and finding an incredible faculty advisor, I got to work on the long process of getting an organization approved on campus.

I was quickly joined by fellow classmate, Michaela Chadwick, from Washington State, and now Austin, TX, who helped facilitate communication between us and Austin Starkey and Cooper Bailey.

I was discouraged by the university at first to not try to start another pharmacy organization on campus. Numbers of students were dropping, and they wanted to make sure that the organization was sustainable. I already knew we wanted this organization to be an interprofessional endeavor to include everyone who would work with oncology patients.

After 2 long years of work, the organization was approved as the NCODA – Interprofessional Hematology - Oncology Organization. We are in our first year as an active group and we are working on healthcare initiatives in Omaha, NE.

Our chapter is currently working on making Care Kits for newly diagnosed cancer patients. They include, a hand-knit beanie (made by student members), tissues, hard candies, puzzle book, hand sanitizer, hand lotion, and lip balm. It is our way of saying “you are not alone in this”. Once completed, they will be distributed to local cancer patients in Omaha, NE.

CONCLUSION

At the time of this creation, we have 115 student members and 13 executive positions including, President, President-elect, a Vice-President of each: Pharmacy, Medicine, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Dentistry, Director of Communications, Director of Social Media & Marketing, Director of Professional Programing, Director of Finance & Fundraising, and our Phoenix Liaison.

As we look to the future, we are hoping to expand to Creighton University's other satellite locations in Phoenix, Denver, and Anchorage as we become more established. Our goal is to provide oncology awareness and education to all the various healthcare professions.

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