

A Conversation with Darshana Seeburruth

Project Lead and Educational Resource Developer



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Why did you get involved with CSPA?

With an academic background in science communication, I've always been drawn to initiatives that bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and the general public. This, coupled with a personal desire to support individuals affected by skin conditions, motivated me to volunteer with the CSPA.

My involvement with the CSPA provides me with a platform to utilize my skills in science communication for a cause I deeply care about. It also allows me to connect with individuals who share similar interests in patient education, advocacy and support. The sense of community and shared dedication to improving the lives of those affected by skin conditions is both inspiring and motivating. I am proud to be involved with an organization that prioritizes patients' needs and works tirelessly to make a positive difference in their lives.

What do you perceive as outcomes of your involvement?

Over the past year, I've had the privilege of contributing to several projects with CSPA. Initially, I had the opportunity to work closely with Mary Pagnotta and a dedicated team of volunteers to spearhead a Nationwide Patient Organization Search. Through this initiative, we sought to identify previously undiscovered patient support organizations across the country. By inviting these organizations to join our alliance, we aimed to strengthen existing skin patient networks and pinpoint areas where support was lacking, so that we could effectively address those gaps.

Additionally, I had the privilege of working alongside the exceptional past Executive Director of CSPA, Rachael Manion, to develop a survey focused on gathering data about drug shortages experienced by patients. With the support of medical professionals, we hope to gather crucial information that will strengthen our advocacy efforts aimed at improving both medication accessibility and patient outcomes.

More recently, I had the opportunity to co-author a feature article in the Spring 2024 Canadian Skin magazine alongside Dr. Muskaan Sachdeva. Together, we highlighted disparities in access to treatments, care, and clinical trials participation for individuals with darker skin tones within dermatology. Our goal was to draw attention to these issues and catalyze meaningful change to ensure that every patient receives the support and care they deserve.

Why do you like volunteering with CSPA?

I love being a part of such a passionate team at CSPA! Working alongside the inspiring staff, experts, and patients has allowed me to broaden my understanding of dermatology and sharpen my skills in science communication and patient advocacy. Being involved with CSPA has also given me invaluable insights into the diverse challenges faced by the skin patient community, enabling me to better empathize with their experiences. What's most fulfilling is knowing that our efforts directly benefit individuals living with skin conditions by providing them with the support and resources they need. I am so grateful for the opportunity to contribute to an organization that holds such strong patient-centered values, and I eagerly look forward to continuing my involvement with CSPA.

Why would you tell others that they should get involved with CSPA?

Volunteering with the CSPA offers a unique opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals affected by skin conditions, all while gaining skills that will help you become a better communicator and advocate for future patients. It also provides a supportive and collaborative environment where you can connect with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and work towards common goals. I highly recommend it!