



**Alisha Atchison**, Medication Access Technician-Specialty Pharmacy, UVA Health

*Nominated by Joshua Weber, System Director, Specialty Pharmacy Services, UVA Health*

### **Impact on Patient Journey**

Alisha is a true patient hero known by providers and patients alike at UVA Health for her unwavering commitment to advancing cell & gene-based therapy adoption throughout the commonwealth of Virginia. She has the ability to provide hope to our tiniest of patients ranging from <6m to 5 years of age suffering from rare and debilitating conditions including spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD). Alisha has worked tirelessly in her efforts to get insurance approval for medications that cost upwards of \$3M including Zolgensma and Elevidys which provide life-altering therapeutic options for both patients and caregivers. Her role requires close collaboration with provider teams, nursing colleagues, pharmaceutical manufacturer teams, revenue cycle team members, managed care, and infusion teams-all to ensure a smooth journey for the patient.

Alisha has helped put UVA Health on the national scene as a center of excellence in the SMA and DMD space. Due to her efforts UVA Health provided the first infusion dose of Elevidys to a patient w/ DMD in the entire state. Additionally, she helped Logan (<6m old) become the first UVA Children's patient to receive SMA gene therapy due to the newly adopted state newborn screening program, before symptoms had a chance to start.

### **Innovation and Leadership**

Alisha always is solution focused and centers her ideas around the patient in all that she does. She has been recognized by providers, senior health system leadership, and pharmaceutical industry representatives as an exemplary advocate for the specialty pharmacy industry. Specifically, Alisha spearheaded efforts to create treatment care plans, best practices, and standardized insurance documentation templates to dramatically cut down on the turnaround time of initial prescribing of C&G therapy to scheduled infusion date. She is also one of our top individuals when it comes to customer service not just in our 96% patient net promoter score, but also, by the tears of joy she has created by providing hope to countless families of newborns and young toddlers who otherwise faced very poor prognoses.

### **Advancement of the Profession**

Alisha is a leader in advancing the role of the pharmacy technician within our Specialty Pharmacy team and greater UVA Health pharmacy enterprise. She has already advanced to the top of our pharmacy technician career ladder and is now a tech level 4-a testament to her individual motivation to constantly seek continuing education opportunities and professional growth. She is also an advocate and leader within our medication access team of technicians and pharmacists, serving as a principal trainer, scheduler, and engagement committee member. Alisha has also recently started a technician-led task force focused on improving technician education and training within UVA Health, improving collaboration with other pharmacy enterprise technician teams, and working with VSHP to advance technician legislative efforts to better our technician's ability to work at the top of their license within in the state of Virginia.



## Community Involvement

Alisha has volunteered her time on weekends and even holidays supporting fundraisers and walks supporting patients and their families who suffer from rare diseases including SMA and DMD. She helped organize a local charity event within the Charlottesville area supporting those with SMA and has been an annual volunteer during the Christmas holiday making "wreathes of hope" for patients and families spending their holidays within the UVA Health System recovering, awaiting infusions, or getting life-saving care.

She has also directly supported and contributed to patient advocacy organizations both financially and in speaking engagements at the local level.