



NAME: CAPT POSTELLE BIRCH-SMITH

JOB TITLE: CONSUMER SAFETY
OFFICER/COMPOUNDING AND PHARMACY
PRACTICE BRANCH

AGENCY: FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
(FDA)

EDUCATION/DEGREES/CERTIFICATES/INSTITUTIONS:

Captain (CAPT) Postelle Birch-Smith graduated with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Howard University, Washington, DC, in 1997. She went on to complete an ASHP accredited Pharmacy Practice Residency at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY in 1998. In addition she has a certificate for Pharmacy-based Immunization Delivery and serves as an Accredited Council of Pharmacy Education Field Reviewer.

CURRENT JOB DESCRIPTION:

CAPT Birch-Smith serves as a Compliance Officer with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office of Unapproved Drugs and Labeling Compliance (OUDLC), Division of Prescription Drugs (DPD), Compounding and Pharmacy Practices Branch in Silver Spring, Maryland.

CAPT Birch-Smith serves as a subject matter expert providing recommendations for regulatory actions in high-risk compounding inspection cases. She serves as and prepares others to be expert witnesses for congressional and court hearings. She maintains cutting-edge regulatory knowledge of industry's pharmacy compounding practices to enable critical analysis of compounding cases.

Her responsibilities include working closely with the Office of Regulatory Affairs during investigations of facilities that perform sterile compounding. She also collaborates with state regulatory officials to help ensure firms adhere to safe compounding practices.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Pharmacy Practice Residency, Brooklyn, NY (1998)
Doctor of Pharmacy (1997)

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE USPHS AS A CAREER:

CAPT Birch-Smith joined the USPHS because it allowed her to pursue the mission of improving public health. She wanted to make a difference on a large scale and was inspired by the national impact of USPHS and the vast job opportunities it afforded. During this interview, she conveyed that joining the USPHS Commissioned Corps was the best career decision she could have made.

PREVIOUS USPHS ASSIGNMENTS:

CAPT Birch-Smith has held various positions within the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) at the FDA. As a Health Promotions Officer (2009-2013), she worked to expand continuing education opportunities available to health professionals at the FDA. She created the FDA Pharmacist Network to disseminate information about training and career development opportunities to both civilian and USPHS pharmacists. She also worked with labeling regulations both as a Generic Drug Labeling Reviewer (2003-2009) and a Regulatory Compliance Officer (2012-2013).

MOST REWARDING USPHS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Serving on the 2013 FDA Pharmacy Inspection Assignment team was her most recent rewarding professional experience. The objective of the assignment was to determine whether certain pharmacies that were known to have produced high-risk sterile drug products in the past posed a significant threat to public health from poor sterile drug production practices. In addition, deploying and interacting directly with patients in emergency situations made her aware of the global impact officers can have on the lives of individuals impacted by crises.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS/ACTIVITIES:

Providing education and developing training programs are areas that CAPT Birch-Smith enjoys participating in above and beyond her primary job duties. CAPT Birch-Smith states "if there is an educational need, I will seek to meet that need." Currently, she participates on a compounding training workgroup and leads the FDA ACPE reaccreditation team.

By LT Garrette Martin-Yeboah