**Excellence in Innovation** **Award Speech**

The Excellence in Innovation Award is a national award coordinated by the National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations, and generously sponsored by Upsher-Smith Laboratories, LLC to recognize and honor a qualified pharmacist who has demonstrated significant innovation in their respective practice, method or service directly or indirectly resulting in improved patient care and/or advancement of the profession of pharmacy.

The tradition of designing innovative pharmaceuticals has been the commitment of Upsher-Smith Laboratories and is driven by the ever-changing needs of patients, physicians, pharmacists, and healthcare organizations. Their perspective is not “more products,” but the right products that make people’s lives better. At every level of their business, they are driven to be the best.

This year's recipient graduated in 2018 with both a PharmD and an MBA. He, along with two other colleagues, won $25,000 worth of funding in a business plan competition their last year of school. They took the funding and followed through with opening their independent pharmacy, Mesilla Valley Pharmacy in Las Cruces, NM in 2018. Shortly after opening the pharmacy, they embarked on their second business, a vertically integrated cannabis company. To continue the growth of the vertically integrated cannabis company, they grew about 50,000 hemp plants on 20 acres of USDA certified organic land. They took the hemp from seed to finished goods and distributed pharmacist formulated CBD products in independent pharmacies across New Mexico and Texas. While growing and distributing from seed to finished goods, he and his colleagues educated over 800 pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, staff, and students on basic cannabis knowledge for patient care.

Please welcome to the podium and join me in congratulating this year’s recipient, Jeffrey Tyler Stewart.