



# PROFILE OF A MEDICAL DIRECTOR

**HEATHER VANSEGGELEN, PHD  
GLOBAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR,  
PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINES**



## OVERVIEW OF MEDICAL AFFAIRS

Medical Affairs serves as a critical bridge between pharmaceutical innovation and real-world healthcare. It integrates scientific expertise, healthcare professional engagement, and patient-focused strategies to ensure treatments achieve their full potential. Medical Directors like Heather lead this charge by driving evidence generation, guiding strategy, and fostering collaboration across the healthcare ecosystem.

## MEDICAL DIRECTOR: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Medical Strategy and Planning:** Designing and implementing strategies to address medical and scientific priorities.
- **Evidence Generation:** Overseeing integrated evidence plans and ensuring robust data generation to support clinical and commercial objectives.
- **Scientific Narrative:** Leading the development of compelling narratives that resonate with diverse audiences.
- **Education and Training:** Equipping regional teams with the knowledge and materials needed for effective engagement.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Building strong relationships with healthcare professionals, patient advocacy groups, and internal teams.
- **Digital Integration:** Championing the use of technology and innovative approaches to enhance outcomes.

## HEATHER'S BACKGROUND

- **Education:** PhD in Immunology from McMaster University, focusing on CAR-T cells.
- **Career Path:** Began in pharma as a Scientific Advisor in Vaccines at GSK Canada. Transitioned from pre-clinical immunology to Medical Affairs through a combination of networking, focus, and serendipity.
- **Experience:** Over 9 years in Medical Affairs, including 2.5 years in global roles and extensive work with the Canadian medical team.

## CURRENT ROLE

**As a Global Medical Director for Pneumococcal Vaccines, Heather:**

- Develops and executes global medical strategies, tactics, and materials to support vaccine launches.
- Ensures that strategic actions are insight-driven, addressing the unmet needs of patients and healthcare professionals.
- Collaborates cross-functionally to align global and regional objectives for maximum impact.

## HEATHER'S VISION FOR MEDICAL AFFAIRS

**Heather envisions Medical Affairs as a driver of innovation, leveraging technology and cross-industry insights to improve patient outcomes. By adopting diverse perspectives and maximizing digital tools, she aims to empower teams and advance healthcare solutions globally.**



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## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

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## ADVICE FOR ASPIRING MEDICAL AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

1. **Stay Curious:** Continuously ask questions and seek new knowledge.
2. **Be Proactive:** Take initiative in your role and look for ways to contribute beyond expectations.
3. **Build and Maintain Networks:** Networking doesn't stop when you land a job—it's a lifelong effort, both internally and externally.
4. **Learn from Other Industries:** Borrowing best practices from other sectors can inspire innovation in medical affairs.

## AT A GLANCE

### CHALLENGES

- High workload
- Lots of competing priorities, but requires focussed time

### BENEFITS

- Lots of contact with external experts
- Interesting and varied work from medical education to evidence generation

## HEATHER'S PROFESSIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Heather is passionate about collaboration, insight-driven decision-making, and creating strategies that prioritise patients. Her work reflects a commitment to scientific rigor, stakeholder engagement, and delivering meaningful health outcomes.