Status of Pharmacy Technicians — First Mates or Stowaways?

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CPE Information

- Target Audience: Pharmacists & Technicians
- ACPE#: 0202-0000-16-180-L04-P/T
- Activity Type: Knowledge-based

Learning Objectives

- Describe the national landscape of and the expanded roles for pharmacy technicians.
- State the regulatory issues and related barriers that have emerged as a result of the expansion of pharmacy technician roles/responsibilities.
- Identify the differences in pharmacy technician education and licensing requirements across state regulatory boards.
- Describe the potential for enhanced patient care, patient safety, and pharmacy technician accountability through pharmacy technician accredited education, licensure, and certification.

Self-Assessment Questions

All of the following are true except:

a. To better assist the pharmacist and the patient, the roles of pharmacy technicians are expanding beyond the traditional order fulfillment function of count, pour, lick and stick
b. Changes in the scope and responsibilities of pharmacy technicians are addressed in PTCB’s job analysis and PTAC’s accreditation standards
c. Various board of pharmacy regulations govern the entry into the profession as a pharmacy technician
d. Recent discussions concerning certification and requiring the accreditation of pharmacy technician education programs by state boards of pharmacy and PTCB have generated a number of questions
e. A national standardized education requirement for pharmacy technicians exists

Self-Assessment Questions

Which of the following statements are false?

a. PTCB published an updated exam in 2013
b. Accredited education will be a requirement in 2020
c. All states regulate pharmacy technicians
d. Pharmacy technicians are positively impacting MTM and Transitions of Care services

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians experience the same linear path into the profession

True or False
Overview

• Current Technician Landscape
• Pharmacy Technician Regulations
• Expanding Technician Roles
• New Initiatives & the Path Forward

Year 2020 & Beyond

• What is the mission & vision of the technician workforce?
• Complexity + Complications = Collaborative Healthcare
  – Capacity, competency, sustainable business models, capability, cultivating leadership
  – Teamwork
    • Can’t achieve goals without it

Federal vs. Private Sector

Federal Sector Pharmacy Technician Roles

Private Sector Pharmacy Technician Roles

By the Numbers

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<tbody>
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<td>$14.33 hr / $29,810 yr</td>
<td>372,500</td>
<td>9% growth</td>
<td>34,700</td>
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Employment increase is 9% faster than average for all occupations
• 275,000 of technicians are PTCB certified
• Increased demand for prescription medications will lead to more demand for pharmacy services

Pharmacist Entry into the Profession

ACPE Accredited Pharmacy School
North American Pharmacist Licensure Exam (NAPLEX)
Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Exam (MPJE)
State Board Requirements

Technician Requirements

There are no national standards regarding:

Employment Education Regulation

• Requirements may include:
  – Formal pharmacy technician education
  – Prior experience
  – National certification (Certified Technician: CPhT)
  – State registration
  – Continuing education; competency assessments
Pharmacy Technician Entry into the Profession

- Pharmacy technicians do not experience the same linear path into the profession
- There is no national educational requirement
- Pharmacy board regulations vary among 50 states + D.C.
  - 45 states regulate pharmacy technicians
  - 23 states include national certification in their regulations

Points of Entry for Pharmacy Technicians

- Certification
- State licensure
- Formal training program
- On the job training
- Certification

Types of Technician Programs

- Certificate and Degree Programs
- College of Pharmacy Associated Programs
- Employer Sponsored
- High School Programs
- Military Training Programs
- Certification Review Courses

- Approximately 1200 programs in US
- 281 accredited by ASHP/ACPE

What Does the Public Think?

In a recent survey, the public was asked about the importance of certification and training for pharmacy technicians:

- Everyone who compounds (or mixes) custom medications is specially trained and certified: 94%
- The people preparing prescriptions are certified: 94%
- State regulations require training and certification of all pharmacy technicians: 91%
- All pharmacy technicians are held to the same standard no matter what state they work in: 91%
- Pharmacies only hire pharmacy technicians who are certified: 91%

What Does the Public Want?

- Three quarters of consumers say that they would seek out a pharmacy where the pharmacy technicians were certified.
- Frequent visitors are more likely to seek out a different pharmacy, and adults with children at home are even more likely to say they’d look elsewhere.

State Board Regulations

What does a ketchup bottle and the current U.S. pharmacy state board regulations on pharmacy technician education and certification have in common?
**Current Board Trend - Measured**

- Purpose: Public/Patient Safety
- 45 states now recognize techs
- Some states have increased the number of techs RPhs can supervise
- Some states spell out specific tasks
- EMS/EMT/crash cart filling and checking
- Floor stock filling and checking
- Dispensing device filling and checking

**Current Board Trend**

- No states allow technician final check in outpatient setting
- To the extent technician can independently perform intermediate steps
  - RPh still responsible for supervision

**Global & National Variability**

... is bad if it doesn’t meet the need

- Role & Tasks
- Workforce Definitions
  - technician, assistant, chemist, aide, clerk, cadre, support workforce, pharmacoeconmist, etc.
- Supervision
  - Direct, indirect, independent
- Legislation
- Education

**The Good, The Bad & The Ugly**

- Controlled substance violations
- Dispensing errors
- Criminal related

**Transitions of the Profession**

The pharmacy profession is under pressure to change.

- Access
- Affordable Care Act
- Mergers
- Collaborations
- Reimbursements
- Star Ratings

**Going in the Same Direction**

**Pharmacist Provider Status**

- Increased pharmacist access = increased care
  - Telepharmacy, clinical team, immunizations
- Increased clinical tasks
  - Flu test, strep test, MTM
- All non-clinical tasks
  - Tech-check-tech
- National standard for pharmacy technicians
  - Defines minimally competent technician
**Tech Check Tech**
- Practiced in Federal pharmacy for many years
- Legal in some states for hospitals
- Pilot project in Iowa community pharmacies
- Idaho moving toward regulations
- Technology will help drive technician role

**Emerging Pharmacy Technician**
**Key Roles and Responsibilities**
- Medication reconciliation
- Medication therapy management
- Immunization
- Indigent care prescription programs
- Sterile & non-sterile compounding
- Clinical technicians (e.g., chronic care, appt. scheduling, medication adherence, smoking cessation, vital signs measurements, data management, etc.)
- Tech-check-tech
- Prescription clarification
- Quality assurance and quality improvement initiatives
- ACA Marketplace Certified Application Counselors
- CMS-CMMI Grant Projects (Innovations Center)
- Community outreach programs
- DUE/ADR monitoring
- Informatics
- Medication safety initiatives
- Telepharmacy

**Year 2020 & Beyond**
- What is the mission & vision of the technician workforce?
- Complexity + Complications = Collaborative Healthcare
  - Capacity, competency, sustainable business models, capability, cultivating leadership
  - Teamwork
    - Can’t achieve goals without it
- Technician involvement at the state & national level is imperative...

**PTCB’s 2020 Initiative**
**New PTCB Initial Certification Requirement**
- Why “2020”
  - Expanding roles of pharmacy technicians
  - Quality and necessity of education
  - Profession directed
- Path Forward
  - Stakeholder meetings & consensus building
  - Accreditation training standards changes
  - Addressing demand; distance learning

**Ultimate Goal of ASHP/ACPE Standards Collaboration (PTAC)**
- A better qualified and trained workforce
- Improved patient safety
- Greater consistency in technician workforce
- Accreditation standards updated as needed to stay consistent with expanding roles and responsibilities of technicians
- Greater ability to delegate technical tasks from pharmacists
- Less turnover in pharmacy technician positions
The Future: A Need for Consensus

PTCB Certification

State Boards of Pharmacy

National Pharmacy Technician Associations

State Pharmacy Associations

Employers, Educators, PTAC

National Pharmacy Associations

PTCB New Initiatives

Research Studies

- Pharmacy Workforce Center
- Public Perception
- Certification Outcomes

2016 Job Analysis

- Detailed survey measures what pharmacy technicians do on a daily basis
- Critical for exam validity

Looking Forward

- Specialty & Advanced Certifications
- Sterile Compounding
- Hospital & Community

Summary

- No national standardized education requirement for pharmacy technicians exists
- Regulations vary governing the entry & practice
  - Support safety & allow innovation
  - Roles are evolving & scope of practice is expanding
    - Pharmacy technicians play integral roles in supporting pharmacists in all practice settings
    - Provider status doesn’t work without technicians
- Greater expectations from technicians
  - Not just technical but patient focus
  - Enable, empower, educate

Answers To Self-Assessment Questions

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Answers To Self-Assessment Questions

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