

The Pharmacy Technician

Chapter Outline

- Define the role and responsibilities of the technician
- Identify permitted and prohibited functions the technician may perform
- Know what the technician must do to receive (re)certification
- Identify the benefits of the CPT relative to a PT

Pharmacy Technician

- A pharmacy technician.
 - Works in a pharmacy.
 - Works under the direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist.
 - Assists in pharmacy activities that do not require the professional judgment of a pharmacist.

3

Pharmacist

- The pharmacist:
 - Provides the final check on the prescription.
 - Has the legal responsibility for patient counseling.
 - Has overall responsibility for all aspects of the pharmacy operation.
 - Monitors for adverse reactions.
 - Screens patients for disease.
 - Discusses cost-effective drug therapy options.

4

Origin of the Pharmacy Technician

- Originally, many pharmacy technicians were trained as medics in the military.
- After service they moved into positions in hospitals.
- In community pharmacy, the pharmacy technician evolved from clerk or cashier to a pharmacist's assistant.

5

Pharmacy Technicians Role

- A pharmacy technician is a team member who assists the pharmacist with delegated functions.
 - Receiving prescriptions
 - Filling prescriptions
 - Taking patient information and processing prescriptions
 - Uses the computer to maintain patient information
 - Inventory control and ordering of drugs
 - Compounding

6

Pharmacy Technicians Role

- Without pharmacy technicians, pharmacists would no longer have sufficient time for the duties involved in “pharmaceutical care.”
 - Counseling patients and reviewing medication profiles.
 - Monitoring for adverse reactions.
 - Screening patients for disease.
 - Discussing cost-effective drug therapy options with the prescriber.

7

Pharmacy Technicians

- As of 2010, there were 334,400 Pharmacy Technicians employed in the U.S.
- By 2020, the demand will increase by 32%.

8

Work Environments

- Employment for Pharmacy Technicians
 - Community pharmacies are the most common workplace
 - Hospital pharmacies are the second most common work place.

9

Work Environments

- Others
 - Long-term care facilities
 - Specialized areas of practice (e.g., nuclear pharmacy) with additional training.
 - Mail order and internet Rx.
 - Pharmaceutical wholesalers

10

The Pharmacy Technician

- Scope of practice
 - Pharmacy Technicians assist pharmacists in areas where the pharmacist's skills or expertise is not needed or legally required.
- Job Description: a written document that states the specific responsibilities and tasks for pharmacy technicians which differs by settings.

11

Personal Standards

- Dependable
 - Perform the job as required.
 - Punctual and flexible
- Detail oriented
 - Correct medication, patient, instructions
 - Drugs are dangerous, and if not handled properly can have serious consequences

12

Personal Standards

- Trustworthy
 - Confidentiality of patient information
 - Access to drugs with abuse potential
 - Access to expensive drug products

13

Personal Standards

- Health
 - In good physical and mental health.
- Hygiene
 - Deals with colleagues, patients and customers
 - Professional image.
- Appearance
 - White lab jacket, grooming, badge, etc.

14

Personal Standards

- Team Player
 - Collaborative effort in working and learning

15

Characteristics

A successful pharmacy technician must possess a broad range of knowledge and skills that include:

- Good math and problem solving skills
- Knowledge and use of medical terminology
- Computer skills
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Dedication to providing a critical healthcare service to customers and patients

16

Characteristics

- High ethical standards.
- Ability to follow standardized processes.
- Eagerness to learn.
- Good research skills.
- Ability to perform accurately and calmly in hectic or stressful situations.
- Ability to prioritize multiple tasks on several projects at the same time.

17

The Pharmacy Technician

- Legal Status
 - Most states have some form of legal recognition of technicians.
 - In Massachusetts technicians must be registered to work in a pharmacy.
 - In some states pharmacy technicians must be certified to practice.
 - In Massachusetts technicians are not required to be certified.

18

Pharmacy Technician's Role

- Each state board of pharmacy regulates:
 - The activities of pharmacy technicians.
 - The ratio of pharmacy techs to pharmacists .
- In Massachusetts the ratio is
 - 3:1 (technicians:pharmacist)
 - OR
 - 4:1 if two of the technicians are CPTs.

19

Education and Licensing Requirements

- ASHP (American Society of Health-System Pharmacists)
 - Developed a model curriculum to meet the needs of all practice settings.
 - 250 accredited schools and institutions by ASHP.
- Performance review
 - A performance review by an employer based on the job description.
 - An employer is legally responsible for pharmacy tech performance and competency.

20

Competency

- Testing – written test or/and practical demonstration to show competency.
- Performance is evaluated by an employer.
 - Includes performance reviews, comments by your supervisor, and complaints.

21

Competency

- Continuing Education
 - An instructional program on new drugs and other pharmacy practice to keep knowledge updated.
- Probation Period
 - The time the pharmacy tech is expected to learn certain skills sets and is usually 3 - 6 months.
 - Leads to either permanent employee or dismissal from the job.

22

Requirements for Registration

Massachusetts

- Completion of a training program
 - ASHP, Armed Forces or Board Approved
 - 500 hours of experience
 - Passing score on an examination
- 18 years of age
- High school diploma or equivalent
- No conviction for a crime related to a controlled substance
- Or Certification by a National Board

23

Duties	CPT	Registered Tech	Tech Trainee
Request and accept NEW Rx	Yes*	NO	NO
Request and accept REFILL authorization	Yes*	Yes*	NO
Enter Rx data into a data processing system	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Take stock from shelf for a Rx	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Reconstitute a Rx	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Affix label to the Rx container	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Prepare U/D, modified U/D, and medication cards	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Make the Offer to Counsel	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Bulk Compounding	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Assist in TRANSPORT of Schedule II Controlled Substances	Yes*	Yes*	NO
Assist in HANDLING of Schedule II Controlled Substances	Yes**	NO	NO
*Provided the pharmacist on duty approves	**Provided the pharmacist on duty approves and the approval is documented in written policies and procedures made available to the Board upon request.		

24

Certification

- A legal proof or a document that an individual meets certain standards provided by a neutral professional organization.
- Two certification bodies:
 1. PTCB offers a National Examination to become a CPhT.
 2. ICPT offers a National Examination to become ExCPT.

25

As of 2012,
PTCB certified >450,000 pharmacy
technicians.

26

Certification and Registration

- Certification must be renewed:
 - Every 2 years just like the pharmacist license
 - Certifications require "continuing Education", 20 contact hours
 - Of these 20 hours, one hour in pharmacy law every 2 years.
- In Massachusetts Registration must be renewed every 2 years on your date of birth

27

PTCB Exam

- 120 minute, multiple choice, computerize test.
- Requirements
 - High school diploma or equivalent.
 - NEVER have been convicted of a felony.
- Tests in areas of:
 - Assisting the pharmacist (66%).
 - Medication distribution (22%).
 - Inventory control systems of pharmacy (12%).
- Score – 650 out of 900 points.

28

New PTCB Testing

- Pharmacology for Technicians 13.75%
- Pharmacy Law and Regs. 12.50%
- Sterile and Non-sterile Cpd 8.75%
- Medication Safety 12.50%
- Pharmacy QA 7.50%
- Order Entry and Fill Process 17.50%
- Inventory Management 8.75%
- Billing and Reimbursement 8.75%
- Information Systems Usage 10.0%

29

ExCPT Exam

- Contains 110 multiple choice questions.
- To take the examination, a pharmacy tech must
 - Complete high school or have a GED.
 - NEVER been convicted of a felony.
 - Must be 18 years old.
- Test areas:
 - Regulations and technician duties (25%).
 - Drugs and drug products (23%).
 - Dispensing process (52%).

30

Terms to Remember

- Roles
- Responsibilities
- Competency
- Confidentiality
- Inventory
- Characteristics
- Scope of practice
- Continuing Education
- Team
- Personal Standards
- Technician Duties
- PTCB and ExCPT
- Registration
- Certification

31

HIPAA 1996

Refers to privacy and security of patient health related data.

- Made health care providers responsible for the privacy and security of all identifiable protected health information
- Applies to a variety of information including
 - Electronic data.
 - Paper and hard copy documents.
 - Oral communication, or billing and claims.

32

HIPAA

- NO casual discussion with anyone about patient data.
 - Includes patient's family member, Patient's friends, etc. without the patient's permission/ after signing a waiver.
- NO discussion regarding topics including Medications and Health issues.
 - Making sure files and documents are securely stored where no unauthorized person can access them.

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