

Pharmacy Associations, Certification, and Settings for Technicians

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Introduction

- Job descriptions and educational requirements of pharmacy technicians are rapidly changing
 - Increased responsibilities, higher education, more legal responsibilities, continuing education
- Each of the 50 states has not standardized the qualifications and job descriptions for the pharmacy technician

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- Types of pharmacy programs available
 - Certificate
 - Diploma
 - Associate Degree
 - Online, Traditional

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Introduction (Continued)

- Each state's Board of Pharmacy determines what standards are and how they must be met by technicians
- Technicians throughout the United States will become respected as pharmacy paraprofessionals

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- Pharmacy technicians and other trained allied health workers can be called “paraprofessionals,” meaning they have been trained to work alongside and assist professionals such as doctors and nurses.

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Historical Data

- Historically, technicians have answered to a variety of titles such as the following:
 - Pharmacy clerk
 - Pharmacist assistant
 - Pharmacy aid
 - Pharmacy technician
 - Pharmacy helper

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- Today, state boards of pharmacy are still standardizing the job description for the position of pharmacy technician.
- You might be hired under some title other than “pharmacy technician” for the same duties that you are learning in this program

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Current Qualifications

- Each state has its own Board of Pharmacy overseen by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy
- A Board of Pharmacy registers technicians and licenses pharmacists, and it also provides consumers with a way to complain or report any problems or illegal actions they have experienced in a pharmacy
- A Board of Pharmacy reviews and updates current rules and regulations pertaining to pharmacy practice; expands use of technicians in the pharmacy field

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- The NABP also helps licensed pharmacists change their licenses to another state if they move.
- Because each state has different, constantly changing laws, the NABP maintains a State Pharmacy Law and Rules database



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Nondiscretionary Duties

- Technicians perform many types of nondiscretionary duties
- *Nonjudgmental* means that any task completed in a pharmacy setting must be checked and approved by a pharmacist
- Limits technicians from interpreting scientific studies, counseling patients, or conferring with other medical personnel

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- What is another word for nonjudgmental that describes a pharmacy technician's duties?

"Nondiscretionary" also means that the final decision lies with the pharmacist.

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Inpatient Setting Requirements (Continued)

- Stat (emergency) orders: technicians must be able to react quickly when emergency (stat) orders are received
- Stat doses are to be delivered within 15 minutes to the stations requesting them (ER, OR, ICU, CCU)

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- What do the common acronyms ER, OR, ICU, and CCU stand for?

Emergency Room

Operating Room

Intensive Care Unit

Coronary Care Unit

- For stat orders, what is more important than speed? *Being correct.*
- Being correct is always more important than speed; also remember that the pharmacist must check the order before it leaves the inpatient pharmacy

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Inpatient Setting Requirements (Continued)

- Inpatient pharmacy requires the ability to prepare parenterals, hyperalimentations, and chemotherapy
- Technicians are required to help the pharmacist answer phones, prepare first doses, load medication drawers (24-hour supply), and prepare unit dose medications

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- What is hyperalimentation?

Parenteral nutrition for patients who are unable to eat solids or liquids.

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Inpatient Setting Requirements (Continued)

- Inventory technician, robot filler, IV technician, chemotherapy technician, anticoagulant technician, clinical technician, supervisory technician

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- Pharmacy robot fillers and other forms of pharmacy automation often look a lot less spectacular than they sound, but they can greatly reduce the amount of manual, repetitive labor that used to be required of technicians.
- Automated dispensing systems fill hundreds of prescriptions an hour. They are loaded with many of the most common drugs and dosages

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Outpatient Setting Requirements

- Outpatient pharmacy is most difficult task because of front-line interaction with patients on a daily basis
- Job tests communication skills and stress level
- High volume of interacting on the telephone, taking in refill prescriptions, answering insurance questions

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- Although customer interaction is time consuming and demanding, it can also be rewarding to see the end result of your work.

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Outpatient Setting Requirements (Continued)

- Insurance billing technician, retail technician, stock inventory technician, technician recruiter, technician trainer

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- Larger retail pharmacies might hire for the specific positions listed, but a pharmacy technician in a small pharmacy will probably do all of these duties.

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Home Health Settings Requirements

- A home health pharmacy fits somewhere between an inpatient and an outpatient pharmacy
- Technicians process medications for patients on a weekly or monthly basis
- There are no patients, doctors, nurses, or other health care providers in this pharmacy

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- In what kinds of situations might home health care services be needed?

Peritoneal dialysis and hospice care are two common home health care needs. Patients might also receive physical or occupational therapy at home.

- About 7.6 million people are served by home health agencies each year.

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Mail Order Pharmacy/E-Pharmacy

- These types of pharmacies provide for common acquired illnesses specific to older people
- Large buildings in industrial areas that are used to process new or refill prescriptions
- New area of pharmacy that is steadily growing

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- Many insurers allow patients to use a specified mail order pharmacy to obtain a three-month supply of a prescription.
- The FDA is still developing ways to regulate and ensure the safety of online pharmacies



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- These four groups worked together to create the PTCB

National Certification for Technicians

- Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) administers the certification exam three times a year in all 50 states
- Four major societies developed guidelines to gauge technicians:
ASHP, APhA, ICHP, MPA

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- Another requirement for national certification is no felony convictions, but each case is evaluated individually, so there might be exceptions.
- A CPhT's certification can also be revoked if he or she is later convicted of a felony

National Certification for Technicians
(Continued)

- Not all states' requirements for technicians are standardized
- Most, if not all, require technicians to have a high school diploma
- A technician who has passed the 100-question exam can use the title Certified Pharmacy Technician and place the letters CPhT behind his or her name

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- These characteristics are the expected professional standards for certified technicians, not the requirements for certification itself

Technician Duties and Qualifications

- For duties of a certified technician, refer to Box 3-2
- For qualifications of a certified technician, refer to Box 3-3

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- In a growing field, there are usually many opportunities for research, technical support, education, publishing, and development.

Opportunities for Technicians

- Proper educational training (AS or BS in computer science) can lead to writing software or supplying support
- Can also write curricula, articles, and books for technician training
- Completion of a training program that offers a degree, such as a certificate, diploma, AA, AS, BA, or BS

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Opportunities for Technicians (Continued)

- Pharmacy business management operator, computer support technician, software writer, author, poison control call center operator, nuclear pharmacy technician, training program director/instructor, corporate pharmacy analysis, pharmacy supervisors, clinical coordinator

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- Do you know any pharmacy technicians who have advanced into areas other than the ones listed here?



