Maximizing Potential in Pharmacy Technicians: The Role of Education in Evolving Technician Responsibilities

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Objectives

• Describe the role of pharmacy technicians in modern pharmacy and characteristics of the updated Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBOP) rules on technician registration

• Summarize the evolution and key aspects of an ASHP-accredited health system-based school of pharmacy technology
Objectives

• Evaluate the role of practicing pharmacist and technician instructors and preceptors within a school of pharmacy technology (SOPT) program
• Recognize the benefits of an ASHP accredited health system-based SOPT
Pharmacy Technician Practice
How Far the Career has Come...
Pharmacy Technician Duties

- Pull and package PO formulations
- Non-sterile and sterile compounding
- Automation of ADCs, EMR, carousels, inventory control
- Presence in regulatory, medication safety, controlled substances, operational settings
ASHP Statement 2016

- Position statement on roles of technicians
  - Minimum competencies
  - Outlines advanced roles
- Support training with accredited program and PTCB certification
- Advocates for regulatory standardization of technician qualifications
2017 Pharmacy Technician Stakeholder Consensus Conference

• Definition
• Education
• Entry-level requirements
• Advanced practice
• Certification
• Regulation

2017 Pharmacy Technician Stakeholder Consensus Conference

- Fundamental drivers for standardization
  - Focus on patient safety
  - Ensure optimal patient outcomes
  - Elevate patient care
Recommendations

- Establishing rigorous requirements for employment
- Take legislative action on state/national level
- Provide necessary allocation of funds
- Be ready to make the “noble decision”
2020 PTCB Changes

- Updated education/training requirements
  - Two paths: Training program completion or work experience
- Updated Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination (PTCE) content online
  - 9 domains → 4 domains
Aligning ASHP & PTCB

- Standardization of training throughout the country
- Increasing rigor of requirement for employment
- Focusing on patient safety and advancing patient care
Advanced Technician Functions

• Bridging transitions of care
  - Medication history
  - Bedside medication delivery

• Acting as pharmacist extenders
  - Patient discharge readiness
  - Chart review (i.e., refill requests, adherence)

• Support services
  - Role in IT (i.e., automation, data analysis)
  - Claim denial centers
Advanced Functions in Literature

**FRONTLINE PHARMACIST**

Use of a pharmacy technician to facilitate postfracture care provided by clinical pharmacy specialists

Adriane N. Irwin, Rachel M. F. Heilmann, Theresa M. Gerrity, Beverly A. Kroner, and Kari L. Olson

**CASE STUDIES**

Clinical support role for a pharmacy technician within a primary care setting

**LETTERS**

Role of the clinical pharmacy technician in a Veterans Affairs pain management clinic
Bridging the Gap

Variable technician duties, entry-level requirements, variable skill sets

Standardized regulation, technician education, platform for advanced roles
Question

What is a fundamental driver for the standardization of pharmacy technician education?

A. Patient safety
B. Optimal patient outcomes
C. Elevate patient care
D. All of the above
Technician Registration
Ohio Technician Registration

• April 6, 2018
• BOP ensuring that technicians are accountable and qualified to practice as a pharmacy technician
  - Law violations may result in Board hearing, and citations follow them through career
Registered Pharmacy Technician

- Does not require certification by national board (PTCB)
- Duties:
  - Accepting new written/electronic prescription orders
  - Entering information into and retrieving information from a database or patient profile
  - Counting, pouring drugs into containers, preparing and affixing labels
  - Stocking and retrieving drugs from inventory
  - Non-sterile compounding

http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/4729.91v1
Certified Pharmacy Technician

Registered Pharmacy Technician, PLUS:
- Accepting and requesting refill authorizations for non-controlled drugs
- Sterile compounding
- Filling of automated dispensing cabinets

http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/4729.91v1
Messaging to Technician Employees

You are now accountable to the BOP for the quality of your work, and subject to penalty.

BOP, ASHP, PTCB are supportive of increasing advanced pharmacy technician functions.

Being a pharmacy technician is a growing profession...THIS IS AWESOME!
Could law violations result in pharmacy technicians getting citations that would follow them throughout their career?

A. Yes
B. No
Technician Education

Cleveland Clinic School of Pharmacy Technology (SOPT)
SOPT Evolution

• Established as a live day program
  - 25 weeks M-Th, then decreased to 18 weeks

• Recruiting difficulties
  - Feedback received conflicts with existing jobs
  - Moved to online program (2018)
Program Structure

• Didactic: 10 modules of online content
  - 400 hours of material
• Simulations: Observation, practice, feedback
  - 80 hours
• Experiential: Technician functions hands-on
  - 160 hours
  - Ambulatory and inpatient
Module 1
Welcome to the School of Pharmacy Technology!

This is the first module of ten. Modules open on Monday and close on Sunday. You will have 2 weeks to complete this module. Please complete each of the lessons and tasks in the module. After finishing all the lessons and tasks, you will need to take the Module 1 quiz.
Benefits of Health System Program

• Relevant to current practice
  - Students see actual job functions
• Precepting culture already well established
• Profit generating
• Recruitment and ease of onboarding
  - Builds a pool of technician candidates
Key ASHP Requirements

• Program Composition
  - Didactic (160hrs), Simulated (80hrs), Experiential (160hrs)

• Program Faculty
  - Program Director, Instructors, Experiential site coordinators
Key ASHP Requirements

- Student acceptance and evaluations
- Organizational support
  - Advisory Committee
- Documentation
Accreditation Survey Highlights

• Documentation of policies and processes
  - Strategic plan with outcomes
• Favored using breadth of available resources for rotations
  - Faculty/staff as preceptors/instructors
  - Experiential opportunities
Proposed 2019 Accreditation Changes

• Entry level vs. advanced level requirements
  - Advanced level:
    • Supervisory and leadership experience
    • Investigational drugs
    • Sterile compounding and chemotherapy
    • POC testing
Which of the following is a component of an ASHP-accredited technician training program:

A. Simulations
B. Preceptor Committee
C. Policies on student acceptance
D. A & C
Preceptorship
Role of the Preceptor

Instructor

Experiential Site Coordinator

ASHP/ACPE Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs
https://www.ashp.org/professional-development/technician-program-accreditation/
Experiential Sites

- Have sought and accepted outside appraisal of the facility
- Reviewed annually by program director or designee
  - Licensure
  - Qualified staff
  - Sufficiently wide range of activities for student
Provide Meaningful Experiences

- Fulfill training program requirements
- Leverage student interests
- Exposure to unique roles at site
- Educate staff
Maintain Flexibility

• Opportunity for questions
  - Set aside time with student to review concepts on regular intervals

• Be dynamic
  - Focus on interests
  - Schedule
Align with Scope of Practice

• Ensure experiences are in scope of practice for trainee
• Required to be supervised
• Recent changes to OBOP rules
Registered Trainees

- Students required to be registered trainees for experiential activities
- Must be under direct supervision of a pharmacist
- 1 Pharmacist : 3 Technician Trainee ratio
Registered Trainees

Permitted activities
• Accept, process, prepare, and sell prescriptions
• Sterile and non-sterile compounding

Unpermitted activities
• Verbal orders or copies
• Stock ADCs, fill code carts or floor stock
Educate Training Team

• Facilitate learning environment
• Provide supervision of tasks
  - Understand scope for a trainee
• Feedback to student and preceptor
Provide Comprehensive Feedback

- Seek feedback from team
- Provide verbal feedback in real time and summatively
- Formal written evaluation
Preceptorship Benefits

- Comprehensive student centric experience
- Professional development and training opportunities for staff
- Staffing assistance in times of need
- Recruitment/employment opportunity
Question

When educating the experiential site training team which of the following should be included?

A. Trainers are focused on explaining why
B. Scope of a trainee
C. Feedback should be provided to student and preceptor
D. All of the above
Key Takeaways

- Technician roles have advanced
- Standardization in training now required
- CCHS SOPT has evolved
- Precepting technician students is unique and beneficial

Provides benefit and opportunity to the profession and patients
Cleveland Clinic

Every life deserves world class care.