Advancing Roles for Pharmacy Technicians in an Evolving Health Care Environment

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CPE Information and Disclosures

Miriam A. Mobley Smith “declare(s) no conflicts of interest, real or apparent, and no financial interests in any company, product, or service mentioned in this program, including grants, employment, gifts, stock holdings, and honoraria.”

A competent pharmacy technician workforce will be fundamental to advancing the patient care role of pharmacists in the FUTURE
Learning Objectives

• Describe the evolving national health care landscape and how it serves as the framework for pharmacy technician role/responsibilities expansion.

• Describe examples of expanded roles and responsibilities for pharmacy technicians and how they may provide opportunities for patient care services advancement, patient safety initiatives enhancement, and pharmacist/pharmacy technician job satisfaction.

• Explain how state pharmacy regulatory variations in pharmacy technician education, training, certification and licensure may support or suppress advanced roles creation for pharmacy technicians.

• Contrast and compare possible pharmacy technician education, training, and certification requirements to assume advanced roles and responsibilities.

Self-Assessment Question #1

Which of the following statements are true?

a. The lack of uniform national standards for pharmacy technician education, training, and certification enhances roles and responsibilities advancement.

b. Pharmacy technician roles and responsibilities have advanced as a result of expanded direct patient care role for pharmacists.

c. The elevation of education, training and certification requirements for pharmacy technicians has been eagerly adopted across all pharmacy practice sectors.

d. Pharmacy technician education and training requirements for entry-level practice roles are equivalent to those for advanced practice roles.

Self-Assessment Question #2

Which of the following are emerging roles and responsibilities for pharmacy technicians?

a. Patient counseling for OTC medication and prescription drug transfers

b. Anticoagulation dosage adjustment and medication reconciliation

c. Prescription clarification and tech-check-tech in community pharmacies

d. Chronic care clinic medication history and influenza vaccine administration
Self-Assessment Question #3

Which of the following statements are true?

a. Medication reconciliation technicians may compile discharge medication lists for skilled nursing home patient admissions.

b. Patient assistance technicians must be familiar with ICD-10 coding.

c. Tech-check-tech programs are conducted in both community and health-system pharmacy settings.

d. All of the above.

Self-Assessment Question #4

A “registered certified” pharmacy technician may be authorized to serve in which of the advanced roles as compared to a “registered” pharmacy technician?

a. Accept new oral medication prescriptions

b. Perform the final tech-check-tech program verification in both health-system and community settings.

c. Work remotely, including remote order entry, in a telepharmacy practice setting or home-based setting.

d. All of the above.

Status of Pharmacy Technicians

- The Odd Couple
- Blurred Lines
- If You Don’t Know Me by Now
- There’s No You Without Me
- Bridge Over Troubled Waters
- The Ugly Truth
- Risky Business
- Sweet Smell of Success
- Our Day Will Come
- A Bridge Too Far
- The Good, the Bad, the Ugly
- To Be or Not to Be
- Trouble in Paradise
- The Wages of Fear
- NIMBY (not in my backyard)
- Mission Impossible
- Radioactive
- A Star is Born
- Are We There Yet
- Madness!
Transitions of the Profession

The pharmacy profession is under pressure to change.
- Access
- Affordable Care Act
- Mergers
- Collaborations
- Reimbursements
- Star Ratings

Emerging Pharmacy Technician Roles and Responsibilities

- Medication reconciliation
- Medication therapy management
- Immunization
- Indigent care prescription programs
- Sterile & non-sterile compounding
- Clinical technicians (e.g., chronic care, appp. scheduling, medication adherence, smoking cessation, vital signs measurements, data management, etc.)
- Tech-check-tech
- Point of Care Testing
- Prescription clarification
- Quality assurance and quality improvement initiatives
- OTC Counseling
- Community outreach programs
- DUE/ADR monitoring
- Informatics
- Purchasing
- Medication safety initiatives
- Telepharmacy
- Refill counseling screening
- Prescription transfers
- Board of Pharmacy
- Education/Educator

Increased demand for prescription medications and interprofessional team-based care will lead to more demand for pharmacy services and advanced roles for pharmacists and technicians.

Advanced roles require moving technicians from unskilled labor to certification for protection of patient safety.

Pharmacy Times, http://www.pharmacytimes.com
Pharmacists Entry into the Profession

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

In Comparison . . .

• 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.

What do this ketchup bottle and the current U.S. pharmacy state board regulations on pharmacy technician education and certification have in common?
State Regulations Vary Widely

- 45 states and DC regulate pharmacy technicians
- 24 states include national certification in regulations
- 3 states accept only the PTCE for national certification
- 19 states require a background check
- 22 states require CE
- 10 states have a pharmacy technician serving on the state Board of Pharmacy
- 5 states do not regulate pharmacy technicians
- Many states have pending legislation or regulations

2016 NABP Survey of Pharmacy Law

Various Points of Entry for Pharmacy Technicians

- Registration
- Licensure
- Certification

- Community based
- Hospital based

- Board Regulation
- Employer Training
- Formal Education
- Board Approved Exam

- Programmatically accredited
- Non accredited
- PTCE
- State exam

Going in the Same Direction

- Well-educated and highly skilled pharmacy technicians have important roles and responsibilities in the pharmacy enterprise.
- Safe and effective medication-use process depends significantly on the skills, knowledge, and competency of those pharmacy technicians.
- To properly fill these roles, pharmacy technicians require standardized education, training, and competency assessment.
- Pharmacists’ ability to redistribute their focus to more clinical and patient-centered activities is dependent upon pharmacy technicians utilization in key roles within the medication-use system.

10 sounds like a LOT. Again, I don’t know the numbers that well, but I haven’t heard this one before.

Jill Spivey, 6/21/2016
### Pharmacy Technician Advanced Roles/Responsibilities

- Usually requires additional:
  - Experience
  - Education
  - Training
  - Competencies (including analytical and problem-solving skills)
  - Certification
  - Competence Assessment
- Supervision of pharmacists
- State Board of Pharmacy approval
- Career ladders
- Liability issues
- Pharmacist resistance

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### Advanced Roles in Community Pharmacy Practice

#### Roles/Responsibilities
- **Clinical support technician**
  - Patient screening for counseling and services
  - Appointment scheduling
  - Refill reminders
  - Medication history
  - Device training and vital sign measurement
  - Point of care testing
  - Patient outcomes data
  - Vaccine administration

#### Roles/Responsibilities
- **Patient Assistance Program technician**
  - Patient identification for services
  - Appointment scheduling
  - Patient application completion, tracking and follow-up
  - Interprofessional team
  - Billing and payment monitoring
  - ICD-10 coding

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### Advanced Roles in Community Pharmacy Practice

#### Roles/Responsibilities
- **Management or supervision**
  - Supervision of other pharmacy technicians
  - Development of position descriptions
  - Development of policies and procedures
  - Scheduling
  - Personnel evaluations
  - Education and training
  - Projects management

#### Roles/Responsibilities
- **Tech check tech (TCT)**
  - Perform final verification on a product for which prospective drug utilization review had been previously performed by a pharmacist
  - Perform final verification for medications under the control of an ordering prescriber such as those in an automated dispensing system.
Advanced Roles in Institutional/Health-System Pharmacy Practice

Roles/Responsibilities

• Investigational drugs technician
  – Manage drug and supply inventories and tracking expiration dates
  – Monitor for study protocol, regulatory, and policies compliance
  – Database management
  – Coordinate sponsor visits
  – Personnel orientation and training

• Specialty Medication technician
  – Obtain patient home medication regimens
  – Refill management
  – Medication adherence monitoring
  – Prior-authorization management
  – Patient assistance program management
  – Inventory management
  – Insurance reconciliation
  – Mailing/shipment management

• Controlled Substance Surveillance Technician
  – Maintain controlled substances records
  – Conduct audits
  – Prepare and distribute utilization and related reports
  – Serve on interdisciplinary monitoring teams

• Medication Reconciliation Technician
  – Obtains patient prior-to-admission medication list from variety of sources
  – Compiles discharge medication lists and corresponding SNF admission lists
  – Communicates with patients, caregivers, and other health care professionals
  – Communicates and documents activities

• Automation/IT technician
  – Configuration, testing, device rollout, troubleshooting
  – Bar coding and scanning
  – Maintenance of medication automation formulary databases
  – Development of rules/alerts
  – Quality assurance audits
  – Staff development and training
  – Special projects

• Telepharmacy technician
  – Pharmacy technician at remote site
  – Processes and/or dispenses prescriptions (may be home-based)
  – Facilitates videoconferencing between pharmacist & patient
  – Completes medication transactions
  – May use automated drug dispensing systems
  – Generates reports
Advanced Roles in Quality Assurance and Medication Safety

Roles/Responsibilities
- Documentation
  - Medication errors
  - Medication adverse events
  - Drug utilization evaluation
  - Drug recall coordination
- Regulatory compliance
  - Medication recall coordination
  - Maintaining staff competency database
  - Performing audits
  - Pharmacy staff education

Roles/Responsibilities
- Research
  - Patient satisfaction
- Pharmacy accreditation preparation

How Will Technology Drive Roles?
Incremental Change Paradigm Shift

The Way Forward
- Elevate standards within the profession to meet the demands of the growing healthcare system
- Improve patient care, outcomes & access
- Support evolving roles & scope of practice
  - Advocacy efforts with legislators, pharmacy associations and other stakeholders
- Provide platform to advance pharmacy technicians
  - Technicians must have education, training and credentials to advance with the pharmacy workforce
Summary

• Pharmacy technician roles are evolving as pharmacist scope of practice is expanding.
• Regulatory variations for pharmacy technicians may support or suppress advanced roles creation.
• Future role changes and expectations for pharmacy technicians can be anticipated.
• Pharmacy technicians should be educated, enabled, and empowered to assume advanced roles to improve patient care and foster medication safety.

Practicing at Top Of Our License!!!

Mediocrity
Excellence

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Questions?

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