

## **MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TEAM: EXPANDING THE ROLE OF THE PHARMACY TECHNICIAN**

**JULY 15, 2017**

**7:45 – 8:45 AM**

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0107-9999-17-102-L04-T 0.1 CEU/1.0 hr

**Activity Type:** Knowledge-Based

**Learning Objectives for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians:** *Upon completion of this CPE activity participants should be able to:*

1. Discuss how the roles and responsibilities of pharmacy technicians are changing
2. Review the benefits of a strong working relationship between pharmacy technicians and pharmacists
3. Describe ways pharmacy technicians can assist pharmacists in providing optimal patient care
4. List the 4 primary tasks that a pharmacy technician can complete in the patient care process
5. Outline the technician skill set needed to advance your role

**Speaker: Christine Cline-Dahlman, BFA, CPhT**

Christine has worked as a technician in 3 pharmacy settings – chain, academic hospital, independent. Her primary work is with The Institute for Wellness and Education (IWE) as Director of Education and Training. IWE provides patient education, ACPE accredited learning, and pharmacy employee training. She also serves as Manager for Clinical Services for The Marquess Group, a family of independent community pharmacies in metro Atlanta, GA. She supervises their AADE accredited Diabetes Self-Management education courses, their on-site immunization clinics, and their Chronic Care Management program.



**Speaker Disclosure:** Christine Cline-Dahlman reports no actual or potential conflicts of interest in relation to this CPE activity. Off-label use of medications will not be discussed during this presentation.



**Making the Most of Your Team:  
Expanding the Role of the Pharmacy  
Technician**

Christine A. Cline-Dahlman, BFA, CPhT

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## Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this activity, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians should be able to:

1. Discuss how the roles and responsibilities of pharmacy technicians are changing.
2. Review benefits of a strong relationship between pharmacy technicians and pharmacists.
3. Describe ways pharmacy technicians can assist pharmacists in providing optimal patient care.
4. List the 4 primary tasks that pharmacy technicians can complete in the patient care process.
5. Outline the technician skill set needed to advance their role.

# ENGAGE!!!

Early Saturday Morning is NOT a reason to stay quiet –  
We will participate and ENGAGE in this topic.

## Where is Our Focus?

- Patient
  - Patient Care
  - Patient Centered Care

## What is Our Purpose?

The real reason for expanding or advancing the role of a technician –

**Revenue of pharmacy!**

## Why Think About Expanding the Role of a Pharmacy Technician?

- How does an independent pharmacy stay financially viable?
- Pharmacy owners: Are you weary to see techs as a labor cost with limited means of contributing to the revenue?
- Pharmacist/owner: Have you run out of time within workflow to tell a tech “what to do or how to do it”?

## Let's Get to the Same Page -

- What is an Expanded Role?
  - Count more pills faster?
- What is an Advanced Role
  - Count 90 pills in 1 tray measure?
  - Count 180 pills without stopping?

## Expanded Role

- Expanded Role –
  - Increased work load
  - Increased decision-making AND accountability for results of decision
  - Increased engagement with patient care services
  - Increased commitment from technician to patient care

## Advanced Role

- Advanced Role –
  - Requires deeper reasoning skills
  - Requires knowledge of pharmacology –
    - Brand AND generic names
    - Basic mechanism of action
    - Therapeutic categories
      - Purpose of each category
      - Differences of each category
  - Requires a body of knowledge that crosses health care topics
  - Requires Tech ENGAGEMENT with Patient Care!

## PTCB Public Perception Survey

- 65% of survey participants incorrectly believe that only licensed pharmacists are active in dispensing drug prescriptions
- 77% of survey participants incorrectly believe that pharmacy technicians are required by law to be trained and certified before they can help prepare prescriptions
- 77% of survey participants say it is very important for state regulations to require training and certifications of ALL pharmacy technicians

PTCB.(2016).Public perception survey [data file].Retrieved from: <https://www.ptcb.org/resources#.WVVKrWjyEZ>

## National Certification

- National Certification is the benchmark for a technician to possess a body of knowledge that shows skill in both the community and clinical pharmacy setting.
- National Certification is NOT the destination for professional development.
- Continual education throughout a technician's professional life is mandatory!

## Change: Roles & Responsibilities

- Take Med Histories
- Manage Inventory
- Medication Distribution
- Patient Education
- Assist with Emergency Care
- Speak with prescribing physician offices
- Resolve insurance issues
- Evaluate pharmacy operations
- Quality Control

Barker, Alex, PharmD, "9 ways Pharmacy Technician Roles are Changing", Pharmacy Times, June 2, 2015

## Pharmacy Revenue

- If the list of Roles and Responsibilities in previous slide were actually completed by a technician, that would free you to –
  - **ENGAGE** in Patient Counseling
    - Prescription medications
    - Over the counter medications
    - Nutritional supplements
  - **ADMINISTER** Immunizations
  - **GROW** pharmacy business and services
- Expanded or Advanced Roles for Technicians is **NOT** to let the pharmacist verify more prescriptions!

## Relationship

## Benefits of Pharmacist & Technician Relationship

- Intrinsic –
  - Natural occurrence from within
- Extrinsic –
  - Originating from the outside . . . And acting upon the part as a whole

2015 National Pharmacy Technician Workforce Study sponsored by Pharmacy Technician Accreditation Commission (PTAC), Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB), and Pharmacy Workforce Center (PWC).

Shane P. Desselle, Touro University California College of Pharmacy, and Erin R. Holmes, University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy

## What Does the Average Technician Look Like?

### STATS –

- The MEAN age was just over 40 years of age
- Has worked for 11 years as a technician
- Has worked for current employer for nearly 8 years
- If works in community pharmacy – primary tasks are receives scripts, collects patient information, fills prescriptions
- States that patient counseling is the most stressful part of their job
- 72% were female

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## What Does the Average Technician Look Like?

- The study offered 17 practice settings -
- **Only 40 of the 516 respondents work in an independent pharmacy.**
  - **Independent Pharmacy had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest participation rate of the 17 choices.**

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## Themes within Study

- This study established 4 themes to address –
- Career Impetus
  - Job Responsibilities
  - Quality of Work
  - **. . . . Equitable Relationships**

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## Relationship Qualities

### • Intrinsic

- Value of work performed
- Work-Life Balance
- Mentor
- Natural interest & talent
- Use of knowledge

### • Extrinsic

- Pay/Wages/Benefits
- Schedule
- Supervision
- Opportunity
- Advancement

## Roles & Responsibilities: Partnership Opportunities

- Take Med Histories
- Manage Inventory
- Medication Distribution
- Patient Education
- Assist with Emergency Care
- Speak with prescribing physician offices
- Resolve insurance issues
- Evaluate pharmacy
- Quality Control

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# Attitude

## Move the Attitude

- Move your attitude **AWAY** as the pharmacist who “**TRAINS** the technician to do what you want her to do.”
- Move the attitude of the technician to **LEARN** – Continual! Be a Self-Starter!
- Turn those spare moments into opportunities -
  - Start with the online learning resource of Health Mart University
  - Continue with online learning from software, products lines, CE webinars

## Move the Attitude

- When the partnership of a pharmacist and technician develops to an **ENGAGED** relationship
  - 
  - The **ATTITUDE** of the parties is synced and the productivity of the mutual effort moves to Collaboration
    - Collaboration moves the **REVENUE** needle upwards

Patient Centered  
Care

## Therapeutic Platforms

- MTM - Medication Therapy Management
- CDTM – Collaborative Drug Therapy Management
- CCM – Chronic Care Management

## Optimal Patient Care

### **Technicians are “The Face” of Pharmacy!**

- Conversations should be highly focused –
  - Chit Chat without purpose – NOT
  - Chit Chat with Purpose – GOAL
  - Every sentence should reference pharmacy services or products
- Educate Patients – NOT Selling patients
- Share the Good News! Beware of HIPAA!

## Optimal Patient Care

- **Revenue** is driven by Patient Care Services that are offered and provided within the pharmacy.
- 2015 Workforce study revealed -
  - Patient Counseling is stressful for technicians
  - IF technicians are apprehensive to engage in Patient Counseling – How can they grow Patient Care Services?

## 4 Tasks that Serve Patient Care

- Med-Sync
- Monitor Adherence and Compliance
- Medication History
- Immunizations

## Primary Task in Patient Care

# Patient Communication

## Communication Opportunities

- Traditional –
    - Still Important, how does it serve Patient Care
  - Intake of Prescription
  - Pick up of Prescription
  - Incoming Phone call
- \*\*\* A technician can function in an advanced role IF they are reviewing the patient's profile for service opportunities during this task

## Communication Opportunities

- Today's Opportunities for Tomorrow's Viability
- Med-Sync – review if patient is still on medication
  - Recent lab results – shows impact of medication
  - Schedule a screening in your pharmacy
- Flu Shot Season
  - Immunizations – primary, travel, back to school
  - State Registry to track your current patients
- Companion products with prescriptions
- “Hear” what the patient is saying about Adherence

## Communication Opportunities

A technician functions in an advanced role when –

1. They are reviewing the patient's profile for service opportunities during these task
2. They engage the patient in the service



# Skills



## Technician Training

- 81% of Survey respondents learned their work from an On-the-Job Training model!
- This stat is the highest indicator that a pharmacist/technician relationship must be collaborative and synced.

## Technician Skill Set

- Communication Skills
- Medication Knowledge
- Computer Skills
- Math Skills

## Technician Skill Set

- Communication**
  - Vocabulary
  - Compose sentences
  - Calm, assuring, quiet voice
  - Reads body language
  - Cultural competency
  - HIPAA, HIPAA, HIPAA!!!

## Technician Skill Set

### •Medication Knowledge

- Able to pronounce both brand and generic names, use interchangeably
- Knows medications and their therapeutic function
- Understands how to identify potential drug interaction or duplicate dosing
- Knows BTC and OTC medications and their interaction with prescription medications.

## Technician Skill Set

### •Computer Skills

- National average for typing – 40+ wpm
- Utilize the primary functions of computer
- Office – WORD, EXCEL
- Know features of Patient Profile / EHR software
- eScript software
- Navigate platforms to track patient adherence and compliance
- Look up drug information on reliable websites
- Navigate websites that support informed job performance

## Technician Skill Set

### •Math Skills

- Add, Subtract, Multiply and Divide - Mentally
- SIG Codes – the meaning and calculation
- Days Supply – with prepackaged medications – communicate with prescriber and PBM
- Children’s dosing requirements & conversion
- Profitability** - read the med bottle for acquisition cost, read the patient label for potential loss, mentally recognize real profit

## Technician Skill Set

- Drive
- Initiative
- Desire
- Develop Professionally
- Engage to serve Patients

## GROW

“As the pharmacy profession continues to evolve and become more integrated into multidisciplinary health teams delivery value-added services in accountable care organizations or medical homes, there is a growing realization that a necessary component in doing so is the elevation of pharmacy technician.”

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Thank YOU!

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