Pharmacy Technician Career: Present and Future

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Financial Disclosure

Zachary Green is employed by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board. He “declare(s) no other conflicts of interest, real or apparent, and no other financial interests in any company, product, or service mentioned in this program, including grants, employment, gifts, stock holdings, and honoraria.”
Learning Objectives

• Explain upcoming changes to the Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination (PTCE) and CPhT eligibility requirements
• Identify and discuss innovative roles and responsibilities performed by pharmacy technicians
• Recognize national regulatory landscape for pharmacy technicians and describe recent updates or changes in laws
• Describe the development of advanced technician certification activities
Mission and Vision

Mission: PTCB advances medication safety by certifying technicians who are qualified to support pharmacists and patient care teams in all practice settings.

Vision: PTCB sets the standard for certification of technicians that improves medication safety and patient care.
PTCB by the Numbers

✔ 676,768 pharmacy technician certifications since 1995*
✔ 288,404 active certified pharmacy technicians*
✔ 48,862 CPhT exams in 2018*
✔ 1,436 secure Pearson VUE testing centers
✔ Administered and accepted in all 50 states, DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico
✔ PTCB is accepted in the regulations of 46 states + DC

*as of 12.2018
By the Numbers

417,720 pharmacy technicians prepare medications under the direction of pharmacist.

May measure, mix, count out, label, and record amounts and dosages of medications according to prescription orders.

https://www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes292052.htm
Recent CPhT Changes:
PTCE Eligibility for HS Seniors

✓ High school students within 60 days of graduation may apply for and take the PTCE
✓ Certification will not be granted until proof of completion is received
✓ Implementation: 2017
Recent CPhT Changes:
PTCE Eligibility for HS Seniors
Recent CPhT Changes: PTCE Test Center Expansion

 ✓ Previously PTCB only delivered the PTCE outside of Pearson Professional Centers when there was a demonstrated need

 ✓ Recent internal analysis supported opening more test centers in education institutions

 ✓ PTCB continues to monitor test center incidents and take appropriate actions to protect the integrity of the PTCE

 ✓ This has resulted in 1,000 additional test centers nationwide
Recent CPhT Changes: ISO 17024 Accreditation

- A rigorous process that includes onsite audits of all program activities
- PTCB will continue to maintain both NCCA and ANSI accreditations
Recertification Requirements

- **2015**: PTCB only accepting pharmacy technician-specific CE
- **2015**: Number of CEs earned via in-service decreased from 10 to 5
- **2016**: Number of CEs earned via college credit decreased from 15 to 10
- **2018**: CEs earned via in-service no longer accepted

**Fall 2019**: Must have eProfile ID on file with PTCB to recertify
Future CPhT Changes: Education/Training Requirement

Certification Requirement

2020

On January 1, 2020, completion of a:

1. PTCB-recognized education/training program OR equivalent work experience

will be required of all CPhT applicants.
Future CPhT Changes: Education/Training Requirement

PTCB received over 700 comments on CPhT changes published in January 2018

Comments were very diverse, ranging from ‘there should be no education or training requirement’ to ‘go back to requiring accredited education’

Follow-up stakeholder outreach led to finalization
Future CPhT Changes: Education/Training Requirement

- Recognized programs must include specific knowledge in their curriculums
- This knowledge supplements the new PTCE content outline
- All ASHP/ACPE and ABHES accredited programs will be recognized
- Program directors of non-accredited programs must attest
- Different and separate from accreditation
- Recognition process to launch fall of 2018
Future CPhT Changes: Education/Training Requirement

Types of programs that can be recognized:

- Certificate and degree programs
- College of Pharmacy associated programs
- Employer training
- High school programs
- Military training programs
Future CPhT Changes: Education/Training Requirement

- Secondary/alternative path for experienced technicians
- 500 hours of work experience required
- Applicants attest they have gained requisite knowledge through work and/or self-preparation activities
- Required knowledge is the same for both paths
Future CPhT Changes:
PTCE 3.0

✔ New job analysis completed late 2016
✔ New blueprint is more focused on key areas relevant across practice settings
✔ Implementation: January 1, 2020
Future CPhT Changes: PTCE 3.0

New Domain Structure
1. Medications (40%)
2. Federal Requirements (13%)
3. Patient Safety and Quality Assurance (26%)
4. Order Entry and Processing (21%)

The full Content Outline and Crosswalk are available at
http://www.ptcb.org/about-ptcb/certification-program-changes
Future CPhT Changes: PTCE 3.0

PTCE will contain only the most important content relevant to both major areas of practice.
Expanded roles often means expanded regulation in states with existing regulations and the addition of regulations in states without.
Innovative Roles for Technicians

- Administration
- Boards of Pharmacy
- Billing and reimbursement
- Clinical technicians (e.g., chronic care, appt. scheduling, medication adherence, smoking cessation, vital signs measurements, data management, etc.)
- CMS-CMMI grant projects (Innovations Center)
- Community outreach programs
- Compounding
  - Non-sterile
  - Sterile
- DUE/ADR monitoring
- Education
- Immunizations
- Indigent care prescription programs
- Informatics
- Medication reconciliation/history
- Medication therapy management
- Medication safety initiatives
- Point of care testing
- Prescription clarification
- Quality assurance and quality improvement initiatives
- Refill counseling screening
- Supply chain management
- Tech-Check-Tech
- Telepharmacy
There has been a dramatic **increase** in the past decade in the percentage of pharmacists performing health care-related services.
2016: What sectors of pharmacy are estimated to employ the largest number of pharmacy technicians (out of 372,500 total)?

- Retail/Community Pharmacy: 71.8%
- Hospitals: state, local, private: 16.5%
- Ambulatory Care: 3.2%
- Wholesale trade: 2.6%
- Government: 2.3%

Regulatory Landscape Update

States to review:
- California
- Colorado
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Mississippi
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- Rhode Island
- Tennessee
- Utah
- West Virginia
PTCB’s Future: Assessment-Based Certificate Programs
Assessment-Based Certificate Programs

- Tech-check-tech
- Medication reconciliation/history
- Hazardous drug management
- Controlled substance diversion
- Billing and reimbursement
The PTCE® is administered and accepted in all 50 states, DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

A. True
B. False
Self-Assessment Question #2

_____ will be required for recertification beginning in the Fall of 2019.

A. NCPDP number
B. DEA number
C. eProfile number
D. State license number
E. None of the above
Self-Assessment Question #3

Pharmacy technicians are allowed by state law to administer immunizations in the following state(s):

A. Idaho and Illinois
B. Idaho, Rhode Island, and Utah
C. Idaho
D. Idaho and Rhode Island
Self-Assessment Question #4

Which topic will not be included in the initial release of PTCB’s assessment-based certificate programs?

A. Technician product verification  
B. Immunization delivery  
C. Hazardous drug management  
D. Billing and reimbursement  
E. Controlled substance diversion
Questions

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