


What's on the Horizon for
Pharmacy Technicians?
ASHP's Pharmacy Technician Initiative




Speaker Disclosures

- Mr. Meyers has no relevant financial disclosures.
- He wishes he did!



Learning Objectives

- Describe the three goals of the ASHP's Pharmacy Technician Initiative (Initiative)
- Describe the purpose for the Initiative
- Discuss strategies for accomplishing the Initiative goals in Illinois



Have you heard of the ASHP Pharmacy Technician Initiative?

1. Yes
2. No
3. I've heard of ASHP and Pharmacy Technicians but altogether in one initiative



The Purpose

- Pharmacy Technicians play a critical role in the provision of medication therapy across the U.S. in almost every practice setting.
- Currently few states have any significant or stringent requirements to become a pharmacy technician and assist the pharmacist in providing patient care.



The Purpose

- The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) would like to create minimum training, education, credentialing and registration standards for pharmacy technicians nationwide.
- This standardization would improve the level of knowledge and competency required to work as a pharmacy technician to assist the pharmacist with medication therapy.



ICHP Was the First to Act!

- In January of 2008 ICHP became the first State Affiliate of ASHP to sign on to the initiative.
- Joined quickly by Michigan (co-founder of PTCB with ICHP, ASHP and APhA) and Florida.
- Official signing of the initiative occurred in June at the ASHP Summer Meeting in Seattle.



The Goals

1. Completion of an accredited training program by all pharmacy technicians.
2. Passage of the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board, Inc.'s certification examination.
3. Registration as a pharmacy technician with their state's Board of Pharmacy or regulating agency.



Goal 1: Completion of an accredited training program by all pharmacy technicians.

- ASHP is currently the only national accrediting agency for pharmacy technician training programs.
- In 2005, ASHP asked ACPE to take over this responsibility.
- ACPE declined because of push-back from the rest of the profession.



Goal 1: Completion of an accredited training program by all pharmacy technicians.

- Current accreditation standards require:
 - 600 hours of combined didactic, laboratory and experiential education
 - Experiential training must include two different practice setting types.
 - Annual Assessment to a training program is \$1875 for one site in 2010 and \$1950 in 2011
 - Application fee for a site to become accredited is \$395 in 2010 and \$415 in 2011



Goal 1: Completion of an accredited training program by all pharmacy technicians.

- The Illinois Pharmacy Practice Act does not currently require completion of an accredited training program
- There are currently 6 accredited programs in Illinois:
 - Blessing Hospital in Quincy
 - Malcolm X College in Chicago
 - Midwest Technical Institute – Peoria & Springfield
 - South Suburban College – Harvey
 - Walgreen Co. - Deerfield



Learning Assessment Question #1

- How many years do you believe it will take to establish a sufficient number of accredited technician training programs in Illinois to make completion a requirement for employment as a technician?



How many years do you believe it will take to establish a sufficient number of accredited technician training programs in Illinois to make completion a requirement for employment as a technician?

1. 1-2 years
2. 3-5 years
3. 5-7 years
4. Longer than 7 years
5. It will never happen



Goal 2: Passage of the PTCB Certification Examination

- Current requirements for PTCB
 - 18 years of age
 - High school graduate or GED
- Illinois now requires certification of newly registered technicians before their second registration renewal.
- Illinois Pharmacy Practice Act recognizes any National Organization of Certifying Agencies accredited exam.




Goal 2: Passage of the PTCB Certification Examination

- Currently both the PTCB exam and the Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ICPT) exam are accredited by NCCA.
- In 2010 the Texas State Board of Pharmacy (TSBP) conducted a review of both exams using 3 independent psychometricians and found the PTCB exam to be superior.
- In May, the TSBP has adopted the PTCB exam as its only recognized pharmacy technician certification exam!




Learning Assessment Question
#2

- Does your pharmacy department require certification for all your pharmacy technicians?




Does your pharmacy department require certification for all your pharmacy technicians?

1. Yes, any exam
2. Yes, PTCB only
3. No
4. Yes of newly hired technicians only
5. We are working on a policy




Goal 3: Registration as a pharmacy technician with their state's Board of Pharmacy or regulating agency.

- The Illinois Pharmacy Practice Act has required registration of pharmacy technicians (originally referred to as Apprentices) since the 1960's.
- The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation estimates that there are over 27,000 registered Illinois pharmacy technicians. Not all work in pharmacy today.




Goal 3: Registration as a pharmacy technician with their state's Board of Pharmacy or regulating agency.

- In 2007, the Illinois Pharmacy Practice Act was amended to require certification of all newly registered pharmacy technicians before the 2nd registration renewal. This means eventually all pharmacy technicians will not only be registered but become certified in addition.




Goal 3: Registration as a pharmacy technician with their state's Board of Pharmacy or regulating agency.

- The Board of Pharmacy and the Department have been very successful in regulating pharmacy technicians because they have been registered for so long in Illinois.
- Registration helps remove bad actors from the ranks of pharmacy technicians.



Learning Assessment Question
#3

- What do you believe is the leading cause of technician discipline and suspension of registration in Illinois today?



What do you believe is the leading cause of technician discipline and suspension of registration in Illinois today?

1. Dispensing errors
2. Diversion
3. Failure to renew registration
4. Failure to repay student loans
5. Sister State discipline



Strategies to Accomplish the Initiative in Illinois

- The good news:
 - We have accomplished Goals 2 & 3
 - The Registration and Certification pieces are in place
- The bad news:
 - We need more accredited programs before we can mandate the accredited training requirement.



Strategies to Accomplish the Initiative in Illinois

- Identify schools with non-accredited programs
- Encourage them to achieve accreditation
- Provide assistance by providing faculty and preceptors
- Design a curriculum that meets ASHP accreditation standards and make it available to the schools that are interested



Strategies to Accomplish the Initiative in Illinois

- Identify barriers that impede pharmacy directors and owners from hiring only accredited program trained pharmacy technicians
- Develop strategies to overcome these barriers
- Identify examples where poor training has lead to medication errors and possible patient harm



Strategies to Accomplish the Initiative in Illinois

- Identify low-cost programs that provide sound education and work with them first
- Work with programs that have access to federal and state funding to assist students
- Increase access to all regions and areas within Illinois




Let's Measure Your Beliefs

- Answer the following two questions honestly from your personal perspective
- We are not recording individual responses
- There are no right answers!




Do you believe that new Pharmacy Technicians should complete an accredited training program?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure




What do you believe is the biggest barrier to implementation of the accredited training requirement?

1. Cost to the student
2. Limited sites
3. Extreme standards
4. Preceptors/sites
5. IDFPR regulation
6. Cost to the institution or pharmacy



Learning Assessment Question #4

- Which key strategy is most likely to help pharmacy directors and managers raise the level of training in their pharmacies?



Which key strategy is most likely to help pharmacy directors and managers raise the level of training in their pharmacies?

1. Online accredited programming
2. Expand the # of accredited programs
3. Share success stories from other states
4. Change the PPA
5. Identify errors & harm



Learning Assessment Question #5

- Which key strategy is most likely to hinder pharmacy directors and managers as they try to raise the level of technician training in Illinois?



Which key strategy is most likely to hinder pharmacy directors and managers as they try to raise the level of technician training in Illinois?

1. Online accredited programming
2. Change the PPA
3. Identify errors & harm
4. Share success stories from other states
5. Another strategy



Questions?
scottm@ichpnet.org



ICHP Annual Meeting 2010

Meyers – What's on the Horizon for Pharmacy Technicians?

ASHP Pharmacy Technician Initiative

121-000-10-053-L03-P

121-000-10-053-L03-T

Post-Test Questions

1. How many years do you believe it will take to establish a sufficient number of accredited technician training programs in Illinois to make completion a requirement for employment as a technician?
 - a. 1-2 years
 - b. 3-5 years
 - c. 5-7 years
 - d. Longer than 7 years
 - e. It will never happen.

2. Does your pharmacy department require certification for all your pharmacy technicians?
 - a. Yes, any exam
 - b. Yes, PTCB only
 - c. No
 - d. Yes of newly hired technicians only
 - e. We are working on a policy

3. What do you believe is the leading cause of technician discipline and suspension of registration in Illinois today?
 - a. Dispensing errors
 - b. Diversion
 - c. Failure to renew registration
 - d. Failure to repay student loans
 - e. Sister State discipline

4. Which key strategy is most likely to help pharmacy directors and managers raise the level of training in their pharmacies?
 - a. Online accredited programming
 - b. Expand the number of accredited programs
 - c. Share success stories from other states
 - d. Change the Pharmacy Practice Act
 - e. Identify errors and harm


5. Which key strategy is most likely to hinder pharmacy directors and managers as they try to raise the level of technician training in Illinois?
 - a. Online accredited programming
 - b. Change the Pharmacy Practice Act
 - c. Identify errors and harm
 - d. Share success stories from other states
 - e. Another strategy

**What's on the Horizon for
Pharmacy Technicians?
Tech-Check-Tech**

Sara J. McEnaney, MBA, PharmD


Clinical Pharmacy Specialist, Performance Improvement,
Regulatory Compliance, Internal Audit and Training

Rush University Medical Center
Chicago, IL




Disclosure

I have nothing to disclose concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation



Learning Objectives

- Describe the typical components of a Tech-Check-Tech program
- Identify barriers to the development of a Tech-Check-Tech program at your own institution
- Describe the benefits of implementing a Tech-Check-Tech program
- Discuss changes to the pharmacist and technician workflow after implementing a Tech-Check-Tech program



Tech-Check-Tech Program

- Utilize technicians to check certain medications in hospitals
 - Unit dose cassettes
 - Automated Dispensing Cabinet (ADC) refills
- Medications typically exempt from Tech-Check-Tech programs
 - First doses
 - Narcotics
 - Intravenous medications



History of Tech-Check-Tech

- 1980s
 - Tech-Check-Tech in California
- 1989
 - Tech-Check-Tech passed in Minnesota
- 1990s
 - Tech-Check-Tech no longer allowed in California
- 2000s
 - Various states begin to develop and implement Tech-Check-Tech programs



History of Tech-Check-Tech

- Requirements vary by state
 - Written into pharmacy law
 - Minnesota
 - Iowa
 - Allowed with approval of a variance
 - Wisconsin
- Illinois pharmacy law does not include Tech-Check-Tech



Tech-Check-Tech Components

- Technician Qualifications
- Technician Training
- Technician Validation
- Quality Assurance Program
- Tech-Check-Tech Ongoing Standards



Technician Qualifications

- Determined by the institution
 - Minimum years of service
 - Technician trained in certain positions
 - Medication delivery
 - Unit dose filling
 - ADC refills
 - IV room



Technician Training

- Didactic Training
 - Introduction to the Tech-Check-Tech program
 - Qualifications / Validation / Quality Assurance
 - Elements of packaging and product characteristics
 - Medication errors and medication distribution process
 - Checking the cart fill and ADC restock
 - Assessment questions



Technician Training

- Practical Training
 - Pharmacist led
 - Technician reviews all errors with training pharmacist
 - Intentional errors present



Technician Validation

- 99.8% accuracy
 - 500 consecutive doses
 - 1500 consecutive doses, 5 separate audits
 - 3500 consecutive doses, 5 separate audits
- Errors intentionally introduced at a rate of 0.2%



Quality Assurance

- A pharmacist will audit a percentage of all medications checked by the technician prior to delivery
- Any errors found will be recorded and discussed with the technician



Tech-Check-Tech Ongoing Standards

- If the accuracy of the technician is less than 99.8% over the lesser of a 6 month period or for the first 2000 double checked doses, the technician is required to be re-trained and re-validated
- If a technician does not check for more than two months, re-validation should be done
- If the technician does not check for 4 months, they must be re-trained and re-validated



Barriers to the Development of a Tech-Check-Tech Program

- Pharmacy state law determines if a Tech-Check-Tech program can be implemented
- Developing and implementing a Tech-Check-Tech program is time consuming



Benefits of a Tech-Check-Tech Program

- Career opportunities for technicians
- Pharmacists can spend more time on clinical activities
 - Working within a multidisciplinary health care team
 - Spending time with patients
 - Teaching pharmacy students and residents



Case Study: Implementing a Tech-Check-Tech Program

- Assessed checking accuracy of a pharmacist
 - Technician filled, pharmacist checked and auditing pharmacist double checked
- Assessed checking accuracy of a technician
 - Technician filled, technician checked, auditing pharmacist double checked



Case Study: Pharmacist Checking Accuracy

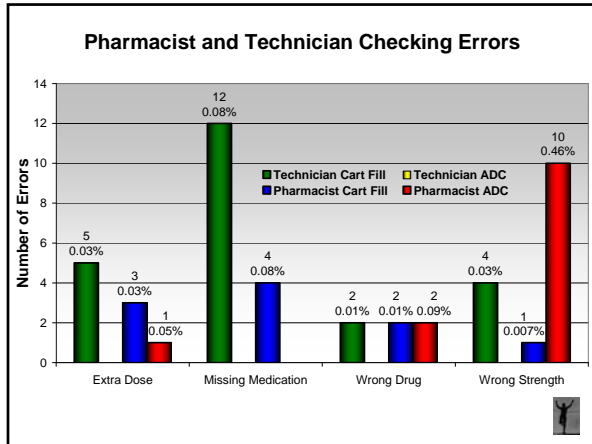
- Cart fill: 99.93%
 - Doses checked = 13,844
- ADC: 99.40%
 - Doses checked = 2,173



Case Study: Technician Checking Accuracy

- Cart fill: 99.85%
 - Doses checked = 15,070
- ADC: 100%
 - Doses checked = 3,793





Case Study: Workflow Impact

- Increase to more frequent delivery of medications
- Pharmacists working in the central pharmacy will have more time to spend on clinical responsibilities

Case Study: Workflow Impact

- Technician staffing model will change to accommodate the expanded role of the technician
- Career advancement for technicians
 - Integrate Tech-Check-Tech into a technician career path

Conclusion

- Various states currently have Tech-Check-Tech Programs
- Regulations differ by state
- Components of a Tech-Check-Tech program are similar between states



Conclusion

- Tech-Check-Tech allows for career advancement for technicians
- Pharmacists are able to focus more on patient care
- Tech-Check-Tech programs are safe and effective for medication delivery



Assessment Questions


1. Typical components of a Tech-Check-Tech program include:
 - a. Technician Training
 - b. Technician Validation
 - c. Quality Assurance
 - d. On-going Standards
 - e. All of the Above



Assessment Questions


2. One benefit from implementing a Tech-Check-Tech program is career opportunities for technicians
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Pharmacy laws for Tech-Check-Tech are the same in all states
 - a. True
 - b. False



References

1. Ambrose PJ, Saya FG, Lovett LT et al. Evaluating the accuracy of technicians and pharmacists in checking unit dose medication cassettes. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm.* 2002; 59:1183-8.
2. Woller TW, Stuart J, Vrabel R et al. Checking of unit dose cassettes by pharmacy technicians at three Minnesota hospitals. *Am J Hosp Pharm.* 1991; 48:1952-6.



Questions?
Sara J. McEnaney, MBA, PharmD
Clinical Pharmacy Specialist, Performance Improvement,
Regulatory Compliance, Internal Audit and Training
Rush University Medical Center
Chicago, IL

