PHARMACY TECHNICIAN PRACTICE: ADVANCEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
Northland Association of Pharmacy Technicians
September 16, 2017

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AGENDA

1. Advanced Technician Roles in Pharmacy Practice
2. Malpractice Data 2002-2012
3. 2017 Pharmacy Technician Stakeholder Consensus Conference
4. 2017 National Boards of Pharmacy Survey Summary
I, Richard M. Hillbom, declare 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.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Describe examples of expanding roles and responsibilities for pharmacy technicians across various practice sectors.

• Summarize the closed claim findings from the HPSO CNA report entitled “2013 Pharmacist Liability: A Ten-year Analysis” and describe how the results may justify expanded technician responsibilities.

• Identify key recommendations from the 2017 Pharmacy Technician Stakeholder Consensus Conference that gained the greatest agreement from across practice sectors.

• Describe state-based pharmacy law variations that may help and/or impede the growth of pharmacy technician advanced roles/responsibilities.
SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTION #1

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

a. Medication Safety Initiatives
b. Anticoagulation dosage adjustment and medication reconciliation
c. Prescription clarification and tech-check-tech in community pharmacies
d. Influenza vaccine administration
e. Board of Pharmacy seat
SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTION #2

According to the CNA Analysis of Pharmacist Closed Professional Liability Claims, which of the following is correct?

a. Lower average payments occurred when a Pharmacist was working alone
b. Lower average payments occurred when a Pharmacist was working with a Technician
c. Higher average payments occurred when a Pharmacist was working with a Technician
d. Lower average payments occurred when a Pharmacist was working with another Pharmacist
Which of the following recommendations from the 2017 Pharmacy Technician Stakeholder Consensus Conference showed the highest support from the participants?

a. The profession should move urgently toward the development and adoption of national education standards
b. Technician education programs should be based on national standards while providing room for innovation and flexibility
c. Pharmacy technicians should be licensed to include a higher degree of accountability
d. National certification without a specified educational requirement
e. A and B
SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTION #4

According to the NABP 2017 Survey of Pharmacy Law Related to Pharmacy Technicians, which of the following titles for Technicians is not currently used?

a. Pharmaceutical Technician
b. Pharmacy Personnel
c. Ancillary Personnel
d. Unqualified Pharmacy Technician
e. Unlicensed Person
ADVANCED TECHNICIAN PRACTICE

- Institutional/Health System Pharmacy
- Community Pharmacy
- Technology
- Quality Assurance and Medication Safety
ADVANCED ROLES IN INSTITUTIONAL/HEALTH-SYSTEM PHARMACY PRACTICE

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
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
## ADVANCED ROLES IN COMMUNITY PHARMACY PRACTICE

### 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

### 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 COMMUNITY PHARMACY PRACTICE

### 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

### 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
## ADVANCED ROLES IN TECHNOLOGY

### 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

**DOCUMENTATION**
- Medication errors
- Medication adverse events
- Drug utilization evaluation
- Drug recall coordination

**RESEARCH**
- Patient satisfaction

**REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**
- Maintaining staff competency database
- Performing audits
- Pharmacy staff education

**PHARMACY ACCREDITATION PREPARATION**
EXPANDING TECHNICIAN ROLES

Progress is being made, BUT:

• Does it make a difference?
• Do technicians bring more value to the healthcare setting?

Unequivocally, 

YES.
2013 PHARMACIST LIABILITY: A 10-YEAR ANALYSIS

• CNA: underwriter of professional liability insurance for pharmacists
• HPSO: Healthcare Providers Service Organization (malpractice insurance)
• Time period studied: Jan. 1, 2002 – December 31, 2011

## CASE EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Prescribed</th>
<th>Drug Dispensed</th>
<th>Indemnity Paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progesterone suppository</td>
<td>Prostaglandin suppository</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Mercaptopurine</td>
<td>Propylthiouracil</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamox</td>
<td>Diabinese</td>
<td>$275,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primidone</td>
<td>Prednisone</td>
<td>$225,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tegretol</td>
<td>Theophylline</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isosorbide</td>
<td>Glipizide</td>
<td>$185,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FINDINGS SUMMARY

• 75.3% of the total claims:
  – Wrong drug 43.8%
  – Wrong dose 31.5%

• Licensing Board actions:
  – No actions taken: 26.5%
  – Warning Letter: 19.5%
  – Probation: 16%
  – License Revocation/Surrender: 3%

• Patient injury (ranked by frequency):
  – #1 Overdose
  – #2 Death

CONCLUDING HIGHLIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS

• Highest average indemnity payments were made on behalf of those pharmacists practicing at least 15 years
• Higher average payments were made when pharmacists were working alone or with another pharmacist
• Technicians employed by CNA insured corporate entities represented 0.6% of the total closed claims

2017 PHARMACY TECHNICIAN STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS CONFERENCE

- Held February 14 – 16, 2017 in Irving, Texas
- 89 invited participants
- 350 individuals participated remotely in the plenary sessions
- Attendees included pharmacists and technicians from various types of practice and education settings
• Sponsored by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board

• Planned in collaboration with the
  – Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)
  – American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

• The necessity of public confidence in pharmacy’s process for ensuring the competency of pharmacy technicians

• An optimal level of basic (“generalist”) knowledge, skills and abilities that technicians should have regardless of practice site

• An optimal definition of entry-level (“generalist”) pharmacy technician practice with respect to (a) legally recognized scope of practice; (b) educational requirements; (c) training requirements; (d) certification requirements; and (e) state board of pharmacy registration or licensure

• The desirability and feasibility of developing a process for recognizing competencies of pharmacy technicians beyond entry-level practice
CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

• The desirability and feasibility of minimizing variability among the states in the definition and regulation of pharmacy technicians

• The entities that potentially could take responsibility for any changes in pharmacy’s process for ensuring the competency of pharmacy technicians
CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Retail Practice: CVS Health/Walgreens

- Retail dispensing
- Specialty dispensing
- Collaborating with pharmacists on clinical issues
- Home infusion
- Mail order
- Advanced role potential
CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Iowa Pharmacy Association (IPA)

- Technician product verification demonstration project findings
  - No difference in error rate
  - Increased patient care activities
  - Experiencing increased opportunities for patient care activity payments
  - Next steps
Ontario College of Pharmacists

- Around 2005 the requirements were expanded
  - Nationally accredited education program
  - National exam
  - Pharmacy Assistants and Pharmacy Technicians
    - Includes independent checking of final product for release
    - Considered autonomous health professionals
    - Clinical/therapeutic services are reserved for Pharmacists
BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Plenaries set the stage for breakout debate

- Topics were debated
- Debate summaries were presented
- Polls were conducted
CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Defining Pharmacy Technicians

– Most conferees agreed with the need to create a legal definition of pharmacy technicians and to restrict the use of that occupational title to those who have met specified qualifications

– In setting the basis for national standards, there was greater support for an inclusive all-setting assessment versus separate assessments for different sectors of practice

Education of Pharmacy Technicians

– Most conferees agreed that:
  • The profession should move urgently toward the development and adoption of national standards for pharmacy technician education
  • National standards should guide technician education
  • Technician programs should be accredited
CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Requirement for entry-level knowledge, skills, and abilities

– All of the 18 areas polled received majority agreement, however, about 1/3 of conferees disagreed with two areas: “demonstrate understanding of nontraditional roles” and “billing”

Certification of Pharmacy Technicians

– There was strong support to require national certification of pharmacy technicians
– There was clear DISAGREEMENT that this should be done without a specified educational requirement
– There was support for maintenance of national certification as a requirement for continued registration
CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS

State laws and regulations on Pharmacy Technicians
- Nearly all conferees agreed that variability in state regulations regarding technicians should be minimized
- And that national standards should not prevent states from innovating and expanding technicians’ scope of practice beyond entry level standards

Advanced Pharmacy Technician practice
- Conferees generally agreed that the immediate priority should be the development of standards related to entry-level practice and that advanced roles for technicians will evolve over time
CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Moving Forward

– Planners should establish a coalition of stakeholders to pursue the consensus recommendations

– Most conferees agreed that participants have a responsibility to work toward achieving the consensus recommendations
2017 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF PHARMACY SURVEY

Summary of Pharmacy Law Related to Pharmacy Technicians*

* Including DC, Guam and Puerto Rico
Only 46 of the 53 states/territories use the designation “pharmacy technician”

- Michigan: Pharmacy Personnel
- DC: Ancillary Personnel
- Nevada: Pharmaceutical Technician
- New York: Unlicensed Person
- North Dakota: Registered Pharmacy Technician
- Ohio: Qualified Pharmacy Technician
- Wyoming: Registered Pharmacy Technician
LICENSING, REGISTRATION AND CERTIFICATION

12 of the 53 issue technician licenses:
  - Alaska, Arizona, California, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, and Wyoming

34 of the 53 register pharmacy technicians. Those that DO NOT:

21 of the 53 require certification:
  - Arizona, DC, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming
PHARMACY TECHNICIAN PRACTICE

- 51 of 53 allow pharmacy technicians to compound medication for dispensing (GA and NY are the exception)
- 13 allow pharmacy technicians to accept orders called in from physician offices
- 15 allow TCT
- 39 allow pharmacy technicians to call for refill authorization (within certain limits)
- 12 allow pharmacy technicians to transfer prescription orders
SUMMARY

• Increasing advancements in technician practice
• Technicians offer value to pharmacy practice
• There’s an urgent need for standardized/accredited education
• Licensure/registration at the state level continues to evolve
• A higher degree of consensus around entry-level technicians occurred among pharmacy stakeholders across all practice sectors compared to previous endeavors
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THANK YOU

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