

2022 North Dakota Registered Pharmacy Technician Survey Results

With the growing demands placed on pharmacy, there have been recent questions related to pharmacy technician job satisfaction, wages, and commitment. The Northland Association of Pharmacy Technicians (NAPT) Executive Board, on behalf of its members, decided the best way to gain an understanding of Pharmacy Technicians in North Dakota was to conduct a survey of all North Dakota Registered Pharmacy Technicians. In collaboration with the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Center for Collaboration and Advancement in Pharmacy (CAP), NAPT created a survey that was distributed to active North Dakota Registered Pharmacy Technicians in May of 2022.

A total of 896 surveys were sent to current North Dakota Registered Pharmacy Technicians. The first question on the survey asked if the participant gave consent to the survey. With a total response of 294, 289 consented to the survey. To better understand the participants, the question was asked in what practice setting they were currently working in. *Diagram 1* shows, with a total response of 267, the plurality of participants (73%) work in a community or hospital setting.

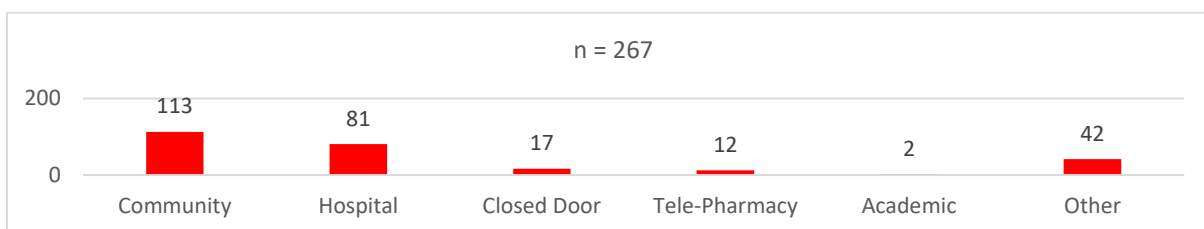


Diagram 1

Of the 113 participants who reported working in community pharmacy, 84 (74%) described their practice as an independent setting and 29 (26%) stated they worked in a chain store setting. When asked what the average daily prescription filling was, results ranged from 51-1000 scripts a day, specific breakdown was 51-100 = 13 (13%), 101-150 = 17 (15%), 151-200 = 18 (16%), 201-300 = 24 (22%), 301-400 = 16 (14%), 401-500 = 7 (6%), 501-600 = 4 (4%), 601-700 = 2 (2%), 701-800 = 5 (4%), 801-900 = 3 (3%), and 901-1000 = 1 (1%). A total of 81 respondents reported working in a hospital setting, of which 54 (67%) described their site as a large hospital setting (over 100 beds), 13 (16%) a medium setting (30-100 beds), and 14 (17%) a small setting (critical access/rural).

The next portion of the survey focused on the participant and how long they have practiced as a North Dakota Registered Pharmacy Technician to better understand the years of experience, age, and employment status. *Diagram 2* represents the years of experience. The highest response was 84 participants indicating they have over 15 years.

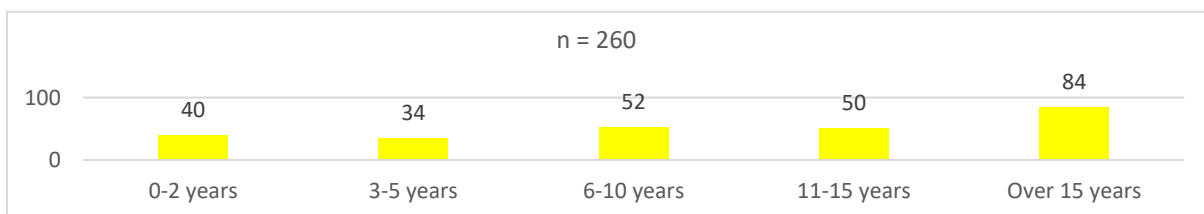


Diagram 2

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the population and age maturity of the current pharmacy technician workforce in North Dakota, a question was asked what the current age of the participant was. A total of 260 participants responded as follows: age ranged from 20 – 50, 196 (75%), age ranged from 51-65, 57 (22%), over 65, 4 (2%), and 3 (1%) participants chose to not state their age. This information suggests there is a large amount of practicing North Dakota Registered Pharmacy Technicians who are potentially mid-career, with decades to continue in the workforce.

When asked what the participant's current status of employment was, 224 (86%) identified working full time. Further breakdown was reflected as part time 20 (8%), PRN 7 (3%), no longer working in this profession 8 (<1%) and retired 1 (<1%). While a minority 8 (<1) are no longer working in the profession, the fact that they continue to maintain their registration demonstrates they are still interested in the profession and perhaps might return at some point moving forward.

Next, the survey focused on demographics of the participants. *Diagram 3* shows a breakdown of the state by county and the section they are broken down into. *Diagram 4* shows a further breakdown of North Dakota into 4 sections, with a total of 266 responses, section 1 = 104 (39%), section 2 = 50 (19%), section 3 = 58 (22%), section 4 = 46 (17%), and out of state = 8 (3%).

South East	North East	South West	North West
Kidder	Rolette	Golden Valley	Divide
Stutsman	Towner	Billings	Burke
Barnes	Cavalier	Stark	Renville
Cass	Pembina	Oliver	Bottineau
Logan	Pierce	Morton	Williams
LaMoure	Benson	Burleigh	Mountrail
Ransom	Ramsey	Slope	Ward
Richland	Walsh	Hettinger	McHenry
McIntosh	Wells	Grant	McKenzie
Dickey	Eddy	Bowman	Dunn
Sargent	Foster	Adams	Mercer
	Nelson	Sioux	McLean
	Griggs	Emmons	Sheridan
	Grand Forks		
	Steele		
	Traill		

Diagram 3

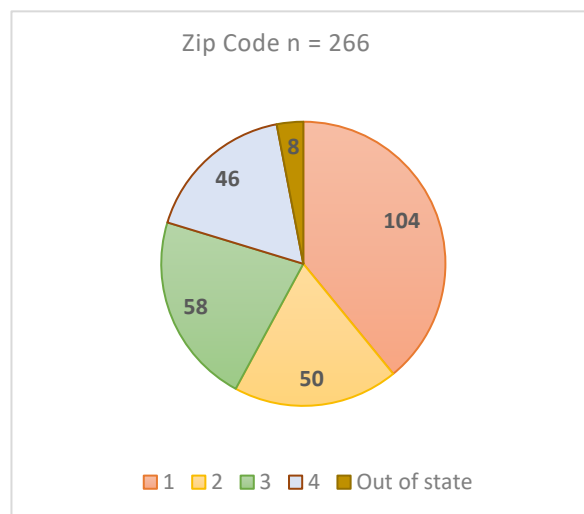


Diagram 4

One of the most common questions, whether on the state or national level, focuses on what the average hourly pay for pharmacy technicians was. Before reviewing the participant answers, it is important to review the standards needed to be a Registered Pharmacy Technician in North Dakota (ND). There are two requirements in order to apply for registration. The first requirement includes completion of an American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacist (ASHP) approved education program which consists of in classroom, online, or on the job training. The second requirement is to pass a national examination that the ND Board of Pharmacy recognizes and approves. Currently, the PTCE and EXCPT exam are the approved exams in ND.

Diagram 5 shows, with a response of 242, the breakdown of hourly pay ranges included a wide range. Focusing on the majority of responses, 201 (83%) responded with an hourly pay as follows: 69 (28%) reported \$19.01 to 22.00, 94 (39%) reported \$22.01-27.00, and 38 (16%) reported \$27.01-> 30.00.

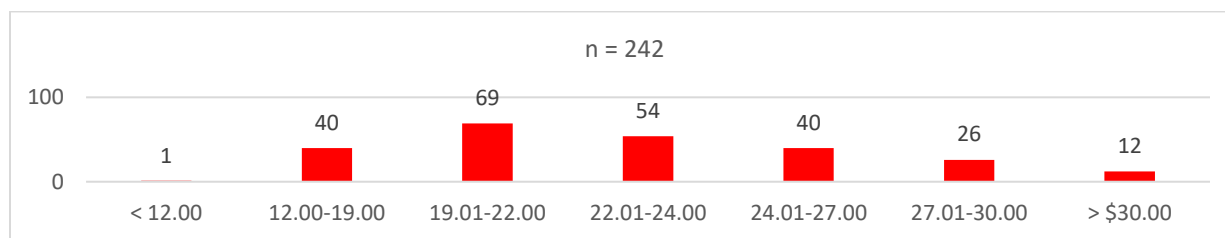


Diagram 5

The importance of benefit availability was also reviewed. *Diagram 6*, with a total response of 241, breaks down the level of importance to specific benefits by the participant. The majority of responses, 95%, indicated that specific benefits are important or very important.

Type of Benefit	Participant Responses				
	Choose not to respond	Not Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important
Paid Time Off	0	2	3	11	225
Sick Time	1	7	15	28	190
Health Insurance	7	6	11	20	197
Life Insurance	7	8	41	39	146
Retirement	2	2	9	27	201

Diagram 6

Continuing with benefits, we reviewed the responses to what benefits are available for participants. *Diagram 7*, with a total response of 241, highlights the current benefits provided. Paid time off, health insurance, and retirement are provided to 88-92% of the participants. Sick time and life insurance are provided to 69-70% of the participants. Comparing *diagram 6 and diagram 7* may offer prospective employers and employees' insight into standard compensation packages provided, and what components are most valued by pharmacy technicians.

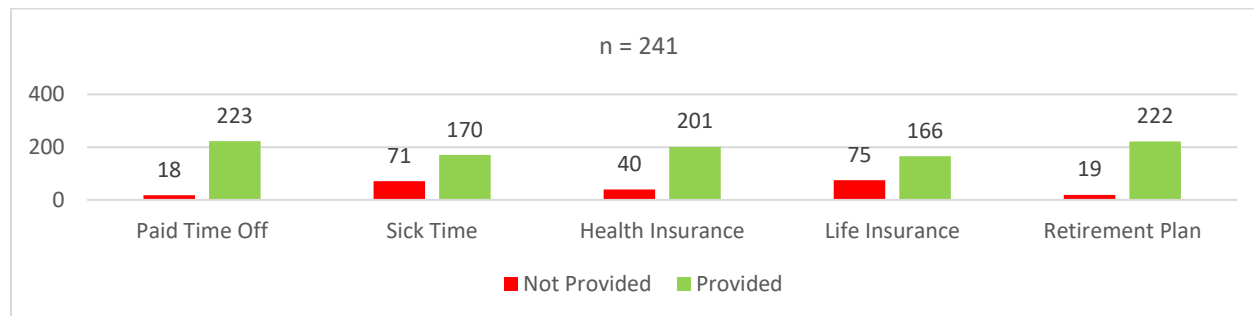


Diagram 7

Satisfaction of the pharmacy technician in their role in the pharmacy is an important component of the impact they make in their day-to-day duties and contributes to the outcome of the care and service given to patients/customers. A series of questions was asked, with the opening of "I feel/am satisfied with". *Diagram 8*, with a response of 191, outlines the participants response to each question.

I feel/am satisfied....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
in my role as a pharmacy technician	8	14	28	84	57
with my current workload	8	20	37	82	44
with my schedule including the daily hours I work	5	14	25	85	62
I have job security	2	9	20	82	78
I receive recognition for my job achievements	13	35	49	56	38
I have a sense of responsibility in my current role	2	11	13	91	74

Diagram 8

Further breakdown of each specific question shows the following: 1. in my role as a pharmacy technician: agree/strongly agree = 141 (74%), 2. in my current workload, agree/strongly agree = 126 (66%), 3. with my schedule including the daily hours I work, agree/strongly agree = 147 (77%), 4. have job security = 160 (84%), 5. recognition for my job achievements, agree/strongly agree = 96 (50%), and 6. have a sense of responsibility in my current role, agree/strongly agree = 165 (86%).

The next question asked the participant if they plan to continue working as a pharmacy technician. *Diagram 9*, with a response of 191, the majority of participants, 150 (79%), responded agree and strongly agree that they plan to continue working in the profession.

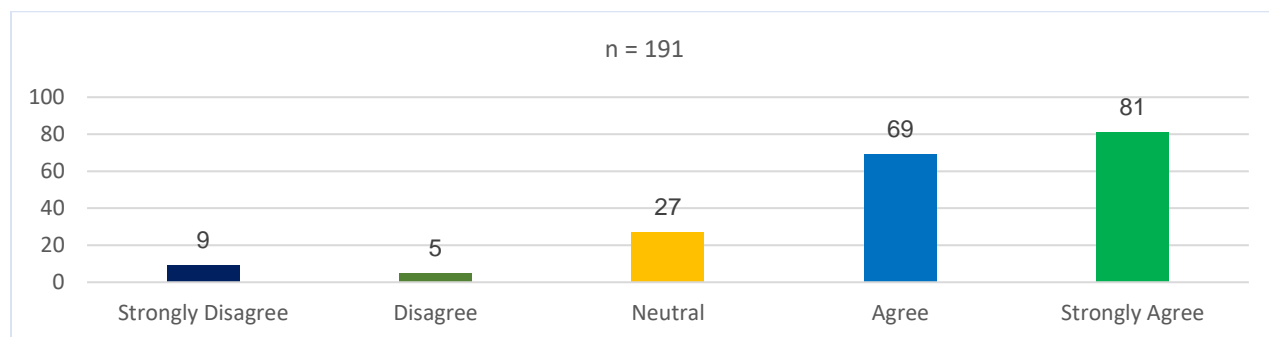


Diagram 9

The next question focuses on pharmacy technicians in advanced or expanded roles. When asked if the participant is a qualified pharmacy technician (based on the criteria as outlined by the North Dakota State Board of Pharmacy) to administer vaccines, subcutaneous, and intramuscular medications, of the 259 participants who responded, 74 (29%) stated they are qualified. To expand, *diagram 10* shows of the 74 qualified, 34 (46%) responded that they are actively administering vaccines.

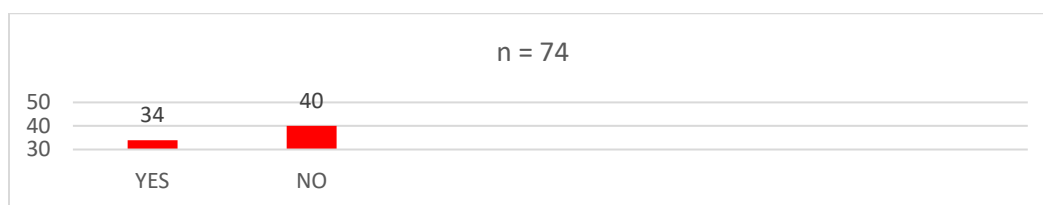


Diagram 10

To get a better understanding of the types of medications being administered by pharmacy technicians, the next question focuses on specifics. *Diagram 11* shows the types of medications being provided as well as the ages of the recipients. Primarily, this data shows COVID 19 and flu vaccine were the top two vaccinations being administered by the participants

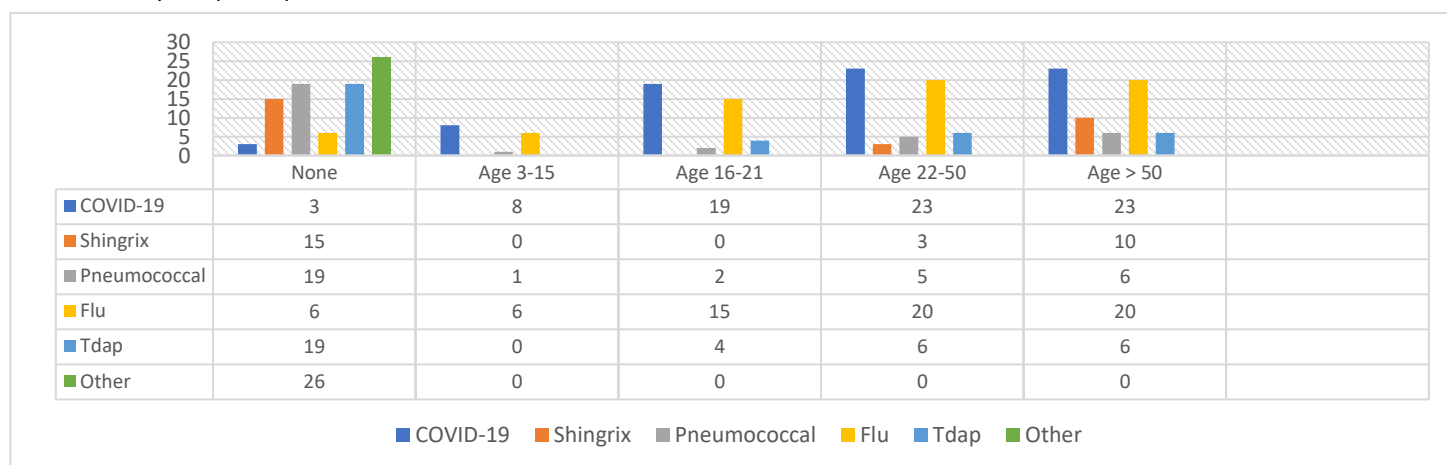


Diagram 11

Next, we wanted to quantify the number of vaccinations administered by qualified pharmacy technicians. In the first year of pharmacy technicians providing immunizations, *diagram 12* shows many of the participants administered over 100 doses of COVID 19 and flu as well as other vaccines in smaller quantities.

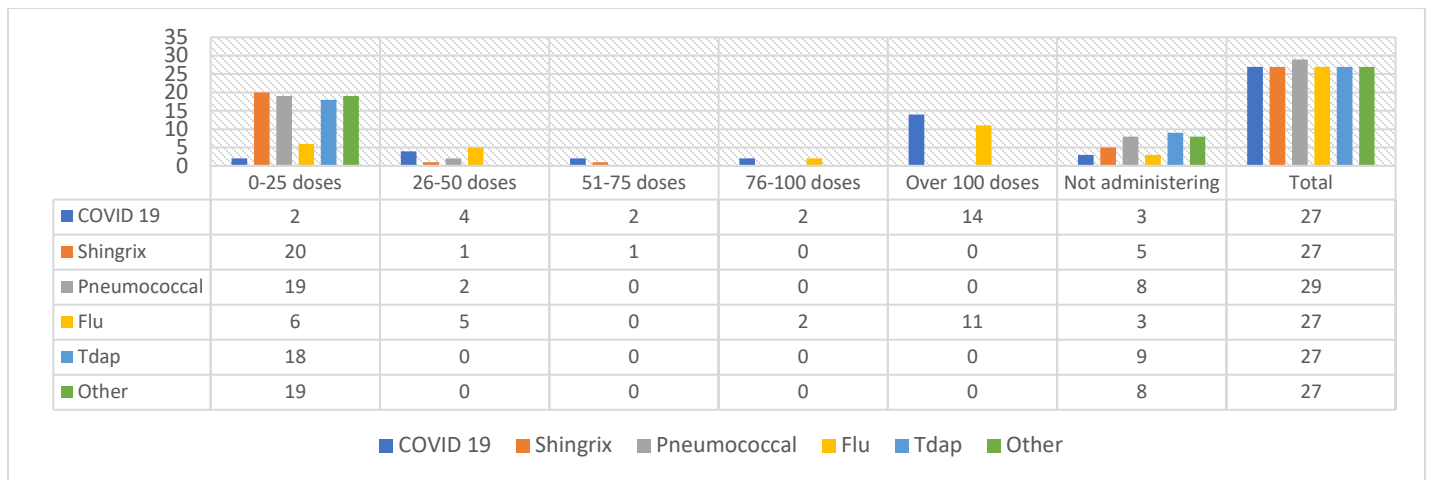


Diagram 12

The next part of the survey focused on the participants who are actively administering such medications, specific to if they feel valued. With a response of 26, *diagram 13* outlines the following questions asked:

1. I feel valued/satisfied with being able to administer vaccines/medications: 14 (54%) strongly agreed, and 7 (27%) agreed.
2. Working in this capacity has added value to my role: 17 (65%) strongly agreed, and 7 (27%) agreed.
3. I feel I am adequately compensated for this additional responsibility: 6 (23%) strongly agreed, 2 (7%) agreed, 5 (19%) neutral, 5 (19%) disagreed, and 8 (31%) strongly disagreed.
4. I make a positive difference by being able to administer vaccines/medications: 17 (65%) strongly agreed, and 7 (27%) agreed.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I feel valued/satisfied with being able to administer vaccines/medications	14	7	3	0	2	26
Working in this capacity has added value to my role	17	7	2	0	0	26
I feel I am adequately compensated for this additional responsibility	6	2	5	5	8	26
I make a positive difference by being able to administer vaccines/medications	17	7	2	0	0	26

Diagram 13

The next part of the survey focused on the participants who answered YES to being a qualified North Dakota Registered Pharmacy Technician to administer vaccines but is not actively administering. Of the 39 participants, as outlined in *diagram 14*, 23 (59%) responded not needed in current workflow, 10 (26%) responded not supported by employer, 4 (10%) responded no time in current workflow, and 2 (5%) responded no longer interested in providing this service.

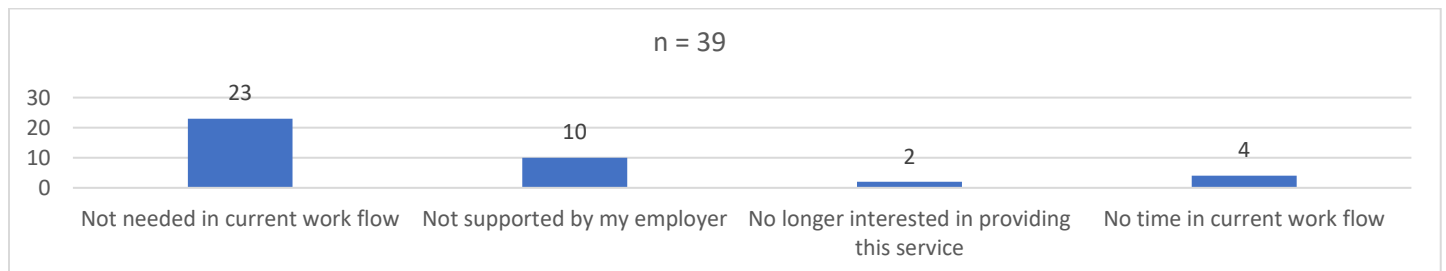


Diagram 14

To further expand as to why the participant may not be interested in becoming qualified to administer medications, *diagram 15* outlines the responses to include: not needed for employment, not interested in performing this function, already too busy with current work duties, and lack of incentive. The participant was able to answer more than one reason, so we were unable to quantify

the number of participants responding to this question. From the data, we concluded that many respondents stated medication administration is not part of their daily workflow.

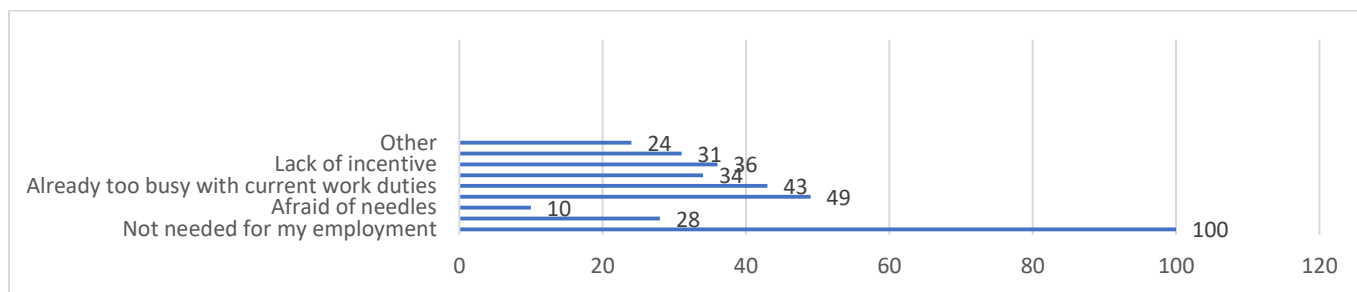


Diagram 15

Our next question asked the participants who are not currently qualified to administer vaccines, what would it take to consider obtaining education to become qualified. *Diagram 16* shows of the 313 responses, 73 (23%) stated if the employer requested, they would become qualified, 85 (27%) stated they would consider if the cost of education was covered, 87 (28%) stated they would consider if they received a pay increase, and 47 (15%) had no interest.

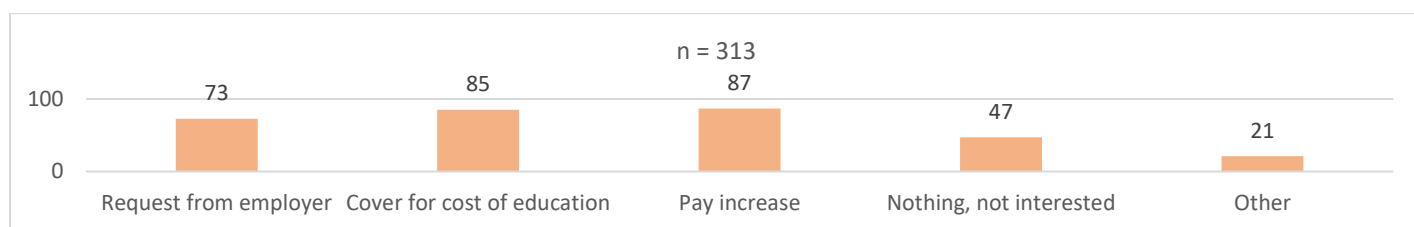


Diagram 16

The next part of the survey focused on specific advanced practice/expanded roles of the participants. This helps us better understand the areas that participants practice in, do not practice in, and whether they feel they have a strong knowledge and/or proficiency in each of the areas identified. *Diagram 17* highlights the results. From the data, we concluded some pharmacy technicians are fulfilling expanded roles in the course of their work, yet in 60% of the ten areas, fewer pharmacy technicians report not having strong knowledge or proficiency in that role.

Question	What areas do you NOT practice in your current work setting?	What areas do you practice in your current work setting?	What areas do you have strong knowledge and/or proficiency?	Total
Sterile Compounding	146	51	85	282
Non-Sterile Compounding	87	96	108	291
Hazardous Drug Management	79	110	99	288
Tech Check Tech	127	66	79	272
Billing and Reimbursement	71	92	119	282
Controlled Substance Diversion Prevention	69	104	101	274
Immunizations	162	48	31	241
Point of Care Testing	187	29	18	234
Medication History	116	80	62	258
Medication Therapy Management	144	65	38	247
Other	172	37	43	252

Diagram 17

To further explore the interest of the participants, we not only wanted to gage the current knowledge and/or proficiency, but also wanted to look at their plans for future expansion. *Diagram 18* highlights the interest of the participants based on their current abilities and future plans for expansion. The areas that respondents indicate future interest were Tech Check Tech, Medication History, and Medication Therapy Management.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Recognition for my achievements	46	49	73	14	10	192
Prestige and status within the pharmacy and/or the profession	36	55	70	22	9	192
The opportunity for independent thought and action at my job	48	56	66	11	11	192
The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities	61	60	53	10	8	192
The opportunity to positively impact our daily workflow	64	55	56	9	8	192

Diagram 18

The last question focused on the satisfaction the participant received from working in advance practice/expanded roles. With a response of 192, *diagram 19* highlights the majority of participants are neutral and/or agree and strongly agree that the ability to practice in such roles has a positive impact in their roles in pharmacy as well as makes a positive impact in the daily workflow. Of the participants, 8.9 – 16.1% did not find satisfaction with expanded roles and responded as disagree or strongly disagree to the 5 questions about satisfaction.

Question	I am not interested at this time.	What areas do you currently NOT practice in but plan to expand in the future?	What areas do you plan to obtain national certification?	What areas do you have national certification?	Total
Sterile Compounding	119	20	27	43	209
Non-Sterile Compounding	102	24	26	56	208
Hazardous Drug Management	101	37	35	37	216
Tech Check Tech	87	54	31	38	210
Billing and Reimbursement	110	29	28	46	213
Controlled Substance Diversion Prevention	96	41	37	38	212
Immunizations	116	41	24	29	210
Point of Care Testing	134	40	19	13	206
Medication History	104	53	20	33	210
Medication Therapy Management	111	51	26	25	213
Other	156	27	13	24	232

Diagram 19

In conclusion, the participant responses were overall positive as well as identified potential areas of improvement. The NAPT Executive Board will use this information to continue expanding the role of the pharmacy technician in the profession. Additionally, the pharmacy technician has the opportunity to use the survey as a tool to better understand expanded roles and areas of growth when working as a pharmacy technician in North Dakota. Lastly, the information assists employers to identify areas that they can improve upon to engage, embrace, and retain their employees.

This article is submitted April 2023 by the NAPT Survey Committee on behalf of the NAPT Executive Board and NAPT General Members

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