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May 9, 2011

Board of Pharmacy  
Technician Working Group  
3605 Missouri Boulevard, P.O. Box 625  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0625

To Whom It May Concern:

As a follow-up to the April 14, 2011 meeting of the Missouri Board of Pharmacy Technician Working Group, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) offers some commentary on the certification of pharmacy technicians. For more than 60 years, ASHP has helped pharmacists who practice in hospitals and health systems improve medication use and enhance patient safety. The Society's 35,000 members include pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who practice in inpatient, outpatient, home-care, and long-term-care settings – as well as pharmacy students.

ASHP is joined by many organizations in strongly supporting the establishment of the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) examination as *the* single, nationally-accredited certification exam for pharmacy technician certification. The following organizations are representative of the broad support for recognition of the PTCB examination as a necessary step in assuring the skills and competencies of technicians: the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), the Texas State Board of Pharmacy (TSBP), and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). In a recent report, NABP recommended that states be encouraged to “recognize certification by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB).” Moreover, NABP performed a psychometric audit of the PTCB’s pharmacy technician certification examination (PTCE) in 2001 and determined that the PTCE is psychometrically sound, defensible, and valid. In May 2010, the TSBP awarded the PTCB with the Pharmacy Technician Certification Provider contract in Texas. PTCB was selected for the contract after a rigorous bidding and evaluation process that included formal reviews and evaluations from three independent psychometricians. TSBP confidently recognizes PTCB as the single provider of certification examinations for pharmacy technicians. In addition, in June 2010, the VA began requiring PTCB certification for VA pharmacy technicians employed at grade GS-6 and above.

ASHP believes it will be difficult for pharmacy to achieve its vision for modern practice unless the profession adopts uniform national standards to optimize pharmacy technician education, training, certification and registration. PTCB has certified more than 380,000 pharmacy technicians in virtually all practice settings – including community pharmacy, hospitals and health systems, and long-term care. Accredited national certification exams offer the pharmacy technician, as well as the general public, the knowledge that the technician has the skills and competencies that are needed to assist pharmacists in providing patient care. By specifically choosing the PTCB Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination as *the* single standard for nationally-accredited technician examination – and also as a replacement to individual, employer-based certification examinations – the public is better assured of a consistent and appropriate measure of skills and competencies. It also provides the Board of Pharmacy the assurance that the examination assesses the duties and responsibilities that all pharmacy technicians should fulfill – regardless of practice setting. Thus, when a pharmacy technician is certified by a nationally-accredited examination, there is continuity in skills and knowledge when the technician changes jobs or moves from state to state.

**TOGETHER WE MAKE A GREAT TEAM**

Because of the continuing evolution of technicians' roles from their historic duties of drug product acquisition, preparation, dispensing, and distribution into higher-level tasks, it will be even more critical that they complete accredited training programs, certification by the PTCB, and registration by the Board of Pharmacy. Enclosed as background on these expanding technician responsibilities is the attached article, "Opportunities and Challenges Related to Pharmacy Technicians in Supporting Optimal Pharmacy Practice Models in Health Systems."

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments as the Technician Working Group works towards developing these important pharmacy regulations to ensure patient safety. If you have any questions regarding this letter, or if we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Karen Noonan, Director of State Affairs and Grassroots Advocacy, at [knoonan@ashp.org](mailto:knoonan@ashp.org) (301-664-8687).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian M. Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brian M. Meyer  
Director, Government Affairs Division

cc: Missouri Society of Health-System Pharmacists

Enclosure: "Opportunities and Challenges Related to Pharmacy Technicians in Supporting Optimal Pharmacy Practice Models in Health Systems," Charles E. Myers, [American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy](#) 2011: 68 e92-100.