



Decoding Pharmacy Credentials

Pharmacists complete many years of education and training to become licensed practitioners. You may have noticed that pharmacists practicing in various settings have many different initials after their names. Perhaps you have asked yourself, “What Does it All Mean?” Well, there are many degree, licensure, and credential programs for pharmacists. Some programs give the pharmacist an opportunity to receive a higher level of professional training in specific areas in order to further enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Below you will find a list to help you decode some of the more common abbreviations.

Academic Degrees

Pharm.D. (Doctor of Pharmacy) degree:

- The Doctor of Pharmacy degree is the required foundation degree for all pharmacy practitioners in the United States. Today, all accredited colleges of pharmacy in the U.S. only offer the Pharm.D.

Master’s degree:

- MHA (Master of Healthcare Administration)
- MBA (Master of Business Administration)
- MPH (Master of Public Health)
- MPharm (Master of Pharmacy)
- MS (Master of Science)

Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy):

- There are many areas in which a pharmacist may earn a Ph.D. One example is a Ph.D. in Pharmacoeconomics.

State Licensure

R.Ph. (Registered Pharmacist):

- Every pharmacist, regardless of their practice setting, must be licensed by the state board of pharmacy, after passing the state licensure examination, and abide by the rules and regulations of the state in which they practice.

Certificate Training Programs

Several certificate training programs for pharmacists exist in different areas of practice. The credentials are listed below followed by the credentialing agency of each program.

- CDE (Certified Diabetes Educator): National Certification Board for Diabetes Educators (NCBDE)
- CGP (Certified Geriatric Pharmacist): Commission for Certification in Geriatric Pharmacy (CCGP)
- AE-C (Certified Asthma Educator): National Asthma Educator Certification Board (NAECB)
- CACP (Certified Anticoagulation Care Provider): National Certification Board for Anticoagulation Providers (NCBAP)
- Credentialed Pain Practitioner (CPP): American Academy of Pain Management (AAPM)
- Certified Specialist in Poison Information (CSPI): American Association of Poison Control Centers
- Diplomat of the American Board of Applied Toxicology (DABAT): American Board of Applied Toxicology

Fellow Programs and Fellowships

Pharmacists can complete fellowships as a form of post-doctoral training to become more specialized in a certain area of research or in the pharmaceutical industry. You typically will not see any titles after the names of these pharmacists other than "fellow" while they are in the fellowship program. However, there is another type of fellow. Professional organizations award the honorary title of "fellow" to pharmacists who have made significant contributions to the profession. A pharmacist does not have to complete a fellowship to become a "fellow" of a

professional organization. Here are some of the more common "fellow programs" that pharmacists may be involved in through the organizations to which they belong:

- FASHP (Fellow of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists)
- FACCP (Fellow of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy)
- FASCP (Fellow of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists)
- FCCM (Fellow of the American College of Critical Care Medicine)

Board Certification

The Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties (BPS) offers pharmacists the opportunity to become board certified in several specialty areas. For more information, please visit <http://www.bpsweb.org/index.cfm>.

- BCNP (Board Certified Nuclear Pharmacist)
- BCNSP (Board Certified Nutrition Support Pharmacist)
- BCOP (Board Certified Oncology Pharmacist)
- BCPS (Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist)
- BCPP (Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacist)

Disease Management Certification

The credentialing program offered by the National Institute for Standards in Pharmacist Credentialing (NISPC)* allows a pharmacist to earn the credentials of a Certified Disease Manager (CDM). A pharmacist may become a Certified Disease Manager in the following four specialty areas:

- CDM- Anticoagulation (Certified Disease Manager of Anticoagulation)
- CDM- Asthma (Certified Disease Manager of Asthma)
- CDM- Diabetes (Certified Disease Manager of Diabetes)
- CDM- Dyslipidemia (Certified Disease Manager of Dyslipidemia)

*The Disease management certification program offered by NISPC expired on December 31, 2008.

Residency Training

PGY-1 (Post-Graduate Year 1):

- A PGY-1 residency is a one year pharmacy practice residency that provides generalized experience in a variety of areas within the pharmacy profession in order to enhance a pharmacist's clinical competency.

PGY-2 (Post-Graduate Year 2):

- A PGY-2 residency is also a one year residency but requires the completion of a PGY-1 residency prior to entering the PGY-2 program. The PGY-2 residency is a residency that builds on the clinical competencies established in the PGY-1 year and focuses on a specific area of practice throughout the program such as pediatric pharmacy, oncology pharmacy, or pharmacokinetics.