ASHP BEST PRACTICES AWARD

Development and Implementation of a Pharmacy Technician Leadership Residency Program

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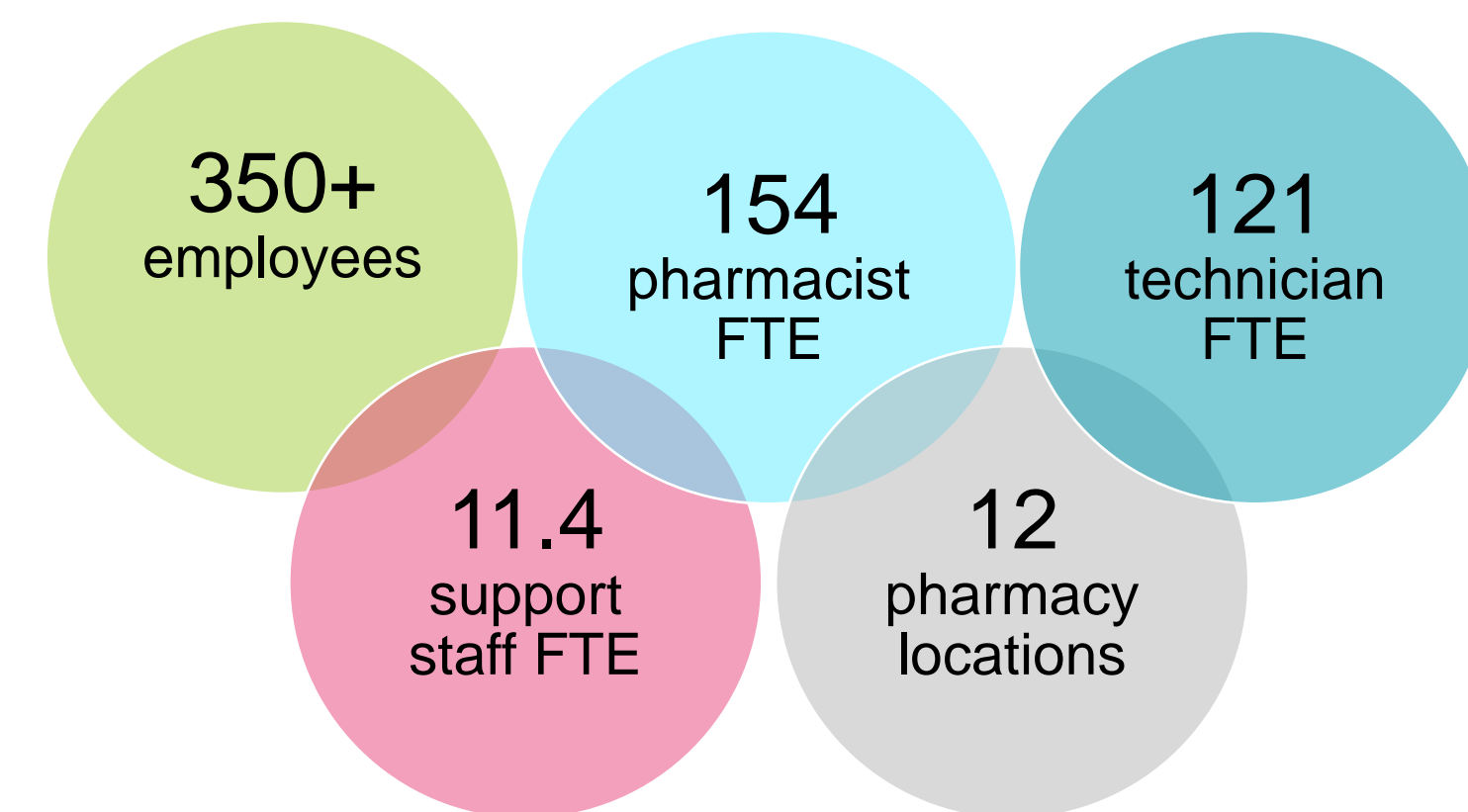Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
Cincinnati, Ohio

Introduction

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC)

- #1 Children's Hospital – 2023 US News & World Reports
- Standalone pediatric health-system with three campuses
- 700+ beds
- 18,000+ employees
- 1.6 million patient served per year

CCHMC Pharmacy Services

- 350+ employees
- 154 pharmacist FTE
- 121 technician FTE
- 11.4 support staff FTE
- 12 pharmacy locations

CCHMC Technician Workforce Overview

- Established internal Technician Training Program
- Three technician supervisors
- Four lead technicians with plans to expand
- Established career ladder with five separate levels

Figure 1: CCHMC Technician Career Ladder

Level	Responsibilities
Pharmacy Technician Supervisor	• Personnel management of technicians • Project management and workflow assessment
Lead Pharmacy Technician	• Frontline leaders to redirect workflow and assess minor concerns • Provide in the moment feedback to staff and assess minor concerns
Technician III	• Ability to complete hazardous sterile compounding and gene therapy • Trained to work on Medication Reconciliation Team
Technician II	• Ability to complete non-hazardous sterile compounding • Ability to staff Triage in non-sterile area
Technician I	• Delivery and ADC replenishment technicians • Preparation of non-sterile preparations

Purpose

- ASHP has encouraged the development and growth of the pharmacy technician role[1]
- Recent technician turnover rates are greater than 20%[2]
- Survey results indicate more than 50% of workers leave their jobs due to their direct manager[3]
- Technicians were previously promoted based on technical skills alone with no formal training
- HSPAL residencies have demonstrated the benefits of formal training within the pharmacist profession

Description of the Program

Program Goals

- Improve technician recruitment and retention
- Decrease the time to fill pharmacy technician leadership positions
- Develop the role and responsibilities of the Lead Technician position
- Establish a standard technician leadership development program that can be replicated at other health-systems

Program Structure

- Six-month residency started in Fall of 2020
- Mirrors HSPAL residencies for pharmacists but adapted for technicians
  - Goals and objectives adjusted for technicians
  - Rotations range from one – four weeks (Figure 2)

Program Highlights

- Mix of preceptors, which include current technician leadership, pharmacist leadership, educators, and medication safety team
- Repurposed FTE from inpatient staffing model
- Targeting three cohorts annually (January, April, July)
- Internal applicants from any of our pharmacy teams
- Residency Advisory Committee (RAC) provides feedback on resident to program director who facilitates feedback on a monthly basis

Application Process

- Up to date resume
- One page letter of intent
- Peer letter of recommendations
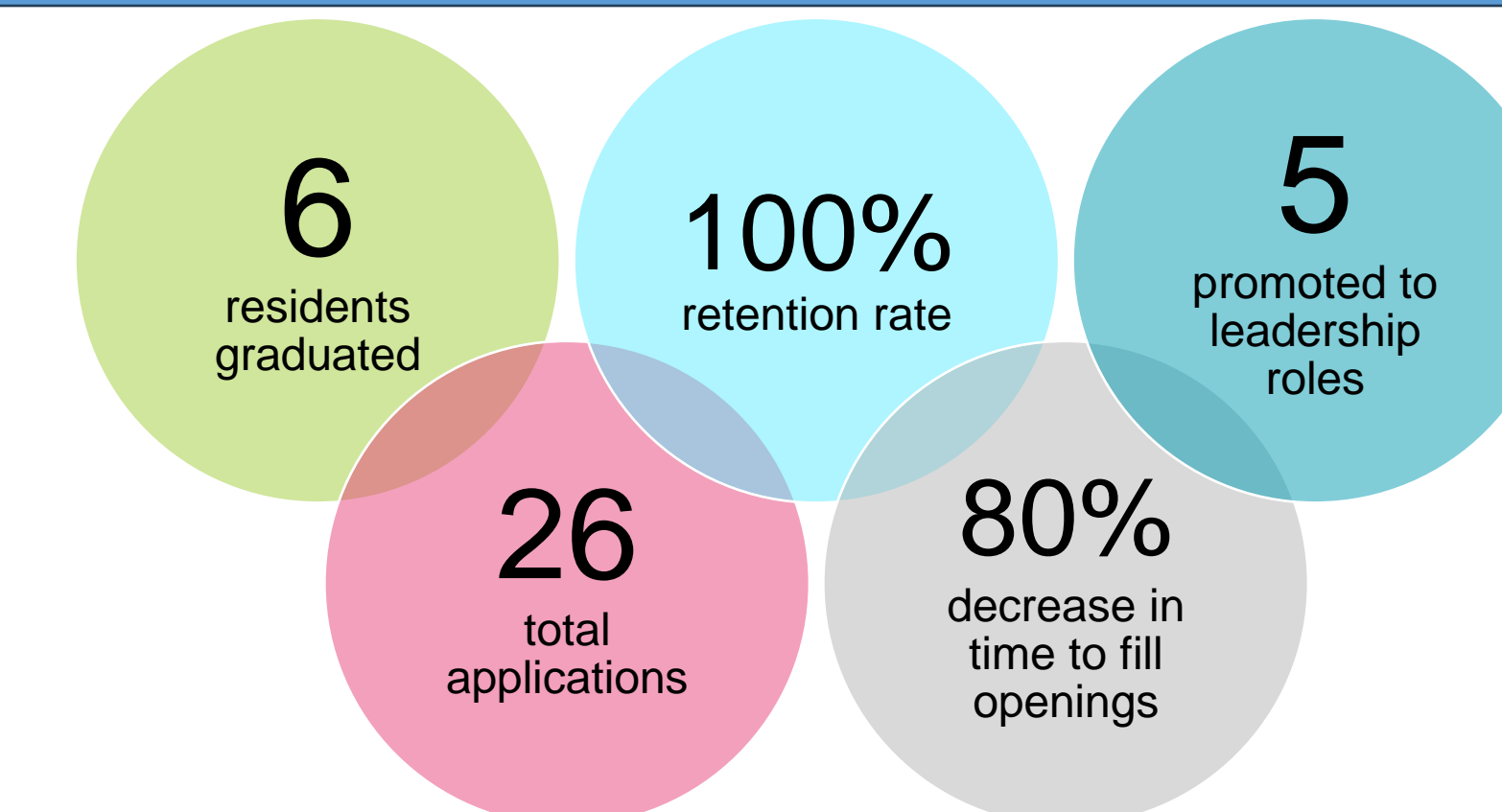- Pharmacy Technician II or above

Interview and Selection Process

- 1 on 1 and panel interviews
- 10-minute presentation with Q&A session
- Objective tool utilized to rate application, interview, and presentation
- Selections are made from RAC members utilizing both objective and subjective scores with the needs of the department as a focus

Figure 2: Sample Schedule

Experience	Preceptor	Length
Pharmacy Department Leadership I	Ryan Craynon (Director, Pharmacist)	4 weeks
HS Pharmacy Administration and Leadership	Mark Thomas (CPO, Pharmacist)	3 weeks
Inpatient Operations and Personnel Management	Pete Shea (Manager, Pharmacist)	3 weeks
Elective/Project Time	Ryan Craynon (Director, Pharmacist)	1 week
Pharmacy Automation	Robert Rose (Manager, Pharmacist)	2 weeks
Technician Leadership I	Krystle Green, Bailey Squibb, & Amber Boland (Supervisors, Technicians)	3 weeks
Education and Training	Faith Kuschel & Laura Belles (Educators, Technician & Pharmacist)	1 week
Medication Safety	Bindu Alex & Sheila Adams (Med Safety Officer & Specialist, Pharmacists)	1 week
Elective/Project Time	Ryan Craynon (Director, Pharmacist)	1 week
Liberty Pharmacy Leadership	Chad Watkins (Manager, Pharmacist)	2 weeks
Pharmacy Department Leadership II	Ryan Craynon (Director, Pharmacist)	3 weeks
Technician Leadership II	Krystle Green, Bailey Squibb, & Amber Boland (Supervisors, Technicians)	3 weeks

Experience with the Program

Program Results

- 6 residents graduated
- 100% retention rate
- 5 promoted to leadership roles
- 26 total applications
- 80% decrease in time to fill openings

Select Resident Experiences

- Led staff development 1:1s and goal setting
- Evaluated applications and led interviews for technicians and pharmacists
- Technician schedule build and review
- Responsible for technician "on-call"
- Led division-wide safety huddles, staff meetings, and annual strategic retreat

Select Resident Projects Completed

- Coordinated all transition planning to move all main pharmacy operations (~20,000 sq. ft)
- Coordinated all transition planning and workflow development for new Critical Care satellite
- Development of COVID19 vaccine receiving, preparation, and distribution process
- Redesign of Pharmacy Technician Career Ladder

Discussion / Conclusion

Lessons Learned

- Resume, letter of intent, and interview workshops should be provided consistently to potential candidates
- Significant effort to demonstrate the value of residency to technicians is required until program is established
- Preceptor development is key for new pharmacist and technician preceptors
- Feedback consistent with level of training and managing preceptor expectations

Key Takeaways

- Formal leadership development for technicians is a necessity given the evolving workforce
- HSPAL residency experiences can be adapted to develop a technician leadership program that benefits the resident, technician workforce, and department
- Development of a pharmacy technician leadership residency provides a sustainable pipeline of highly trained technician leaders
- Significant effort is required to build and demonstrate the value of a residency to the technician workforce
- CCHMC pharmacy technician leadership residents reported most improvement in management skills, functional skills and knowledge, and communication skills

Acknowledgements

References

1. Schultz et al. ASHP Statement on the Roles of Pharmacy Technicians, *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*, Volume 73, Issue 12, 15 June 2016, Pages 928–930, https://doi.org/10.2146/ajhp151014
2. ASHP Statement: Hospitals and Health Systems Experiencing Severe Shortage of Pharmacy Technicians. Available at: https://www.ashp.org/news/2022/03/15/hospitals-and-health-systems-experiencing-severe-shortage-of-pharmacy-technicians?loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly. Accessed June 30th, 2022.
3. Jim Harter and Amy Adkins: Employees Want a Lot More From Their Managers. 8 April 2015. Available at: https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236570/employees-lot-managers.aspx. Accessed July 24th, 2023.