

PTCE Changes Impact CPE Requirements for Recertification

The Pharmacy Technician Certification Board has certified over 500,000 technicians since 1995, and 2013 saw many changes announced to the Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam (PTCE) program. All changes are incurring in phases, the first changes went into place earlier in 2014. Among the changes, several focus on CPE requirements for recertification. Recertification changes by year:

2014—As part of the 20 hours of continuing education required every two years for recertification, one hour of patient safety CPE will be required, in addition to the existing one hour requirement for law CPE.

2015—All 20 hours required for recertification will be required to be pharmacy-technician specific CPE. Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) “T” or technician-designated CPE will satisfy this requirement.

2015—PTCB will reduce the number of allowable ‘in-service’ CE hours from 10 to 5. In-service CE refers to certain projects or training earned at a CPhT’s workplace under a pharmacist’s supervision.

2016—Allowable CPE hours from college courses will be reduced from 15 to 10.

2018—Allowable CPE hours from in-service programs in the workplace are slated to be phased out by this date.

For more details on these and other changes to the PTCE, [read more](#).

technician highlights

Jahara Russell, CPhT

Jahara Russell has been a pharmacy technician for Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, PA for the past seven years. After attending Morgan State University, she began working at Einstein in 2008. She became PTCB certified in 2009. From 2008 to 2012 she worked in the inpatient pharmacy as an iv technician in the neonatal intensive care unit. In 2012, she transitioned to the Lead Pharmacy Technician for Transitions of Care role.



When Jahara began working in this new role, her position was considered an advanced practice role for a pharmacy technician because most technicians at her site work solely within the walls of the pharmacy. She spends the majority of her time on the floor interacting with the physicians, nurses and patients directly. Not only is it her responsibility to help a patient smoothly transition to home, but also to reduce the likelihood of the patient being readmitted.

In Jahara’s current role, she helps to ensure that a patient’s transition from being in the hospital to going home goes smoothly and is stress free. She is responsible for working closely with patients preparing to be discharged to understand their pharmacy needs. If the patient would like to use the hospital’s pharmacy, she ensures insurance issues are handled, their prescriptions are filled, and she even makes bedside deliveries. “All of the help I offer is rewarding for me. On a daily basis, I hear Thank you so much!,” Jahara says.

Additionally, Jahara participates in a technician competency group at Einstein to assist in creating technician continuing education within the department. This is also a great way to help technicians keep abreast of current events, regulations, and best practices within the Einstein organization. Jahara had the privilege of presenting at the American Pharmacist’s Association Annual Meeting in Los Angeles in 2013 in a program entitled *The Untapped Resource in Your Pharmacy: Maximizing the Pharmacy Technician’s role in Transitions of Care*. She also presented at the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting in Orlando in December 2013 in a program entitled *Pharmacy Technicians Helping to Reduce Re-Admissions*.

When not working in the pharmacy Jahara loves to write and has done so as long as she can remember. She has written a number of articles that have been published and finished writing her first screenplay about 3 years ago. Jahara says, “I have no idea what’s in the cards for me but the only way I could leave the world of pharmacy, would be to pursue my writing career.”

UPCOMING

Technician Portal Topics

Advanced Pharmacy Technician Roles

Ensuring all pharmacy team members perform to their full scope of practice will result in optimal drug therapy outcomes. To accomplish this, expansion of technician roles to optimize the pharmacy workforce is essential. This activity will discuss key opportunities for advanced pharmacy technician roles, and ways to develop competent technicians to deliver important elements of focused patient care by effective collaboration with pharmacists and various other members of the healthcare team. Participants will learn firsthand how advanced training and opportunities have impacted the career of a specialized oncology technician. Tune in on Thursday, October 30, 2014 from 3–4 PM EST to hear **Tricia L. Parker, Pharm.D., BCPS**, Assistant Chief—Clinical Coordinator UC Davis Medical Center—Inpatient Pharmacy Services and Associate Professor, UCD School of Medicine & UCSF School of Pharmacy Sacramento, California and **Tanja Moore**, Oncology Pharmacy Technician UC Davis Medical Center present “*Advanced Pharmacy Technician Roles: Focus on Specialized Training and Career Advancement Opportunities*”.

Immunizations

As the pharmacist’s role as an immunization provider has expanded nationwide, so too has the role of the pharmacy technician. Pharmacy technicians are key players in the “immunization neighborhood” and help to assure safe provision of vaccines in both community and health-system pharmacy settings. This program will serve as a primer for pharmacy technicians on immunizations—how they work, which vaccines are most likely to be seen in practice, and what you need to know to help patients receive the immunizations they need. Tune in on Tuesday, November 11, 2014 12–1PM EST to hear **Macary Weck Marciniak, PharmD, BCACP, BCPS, FAPhA**, Clinical Associate Professor at UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill present “*Immunizations from A to Z (ACIP to Zostavax)*”.

How do you deal with difficult customers?

This is an important question, as dealing with difficult customers may often be a stressful situation. Some customers may be vocal. Many are silent. A few customers may be aggressive. Others can be inquisitive. You may be able to detect an unsatisfied customer just by observing their body language. Each customer is important to ensure the success of any pharmacy. The ultimate goal to challenging situations is to provide a win-win solution so the customer leaves feeling valued and respected.

There are potential opportunities when faced with particularly problematic customers. During your initial encounter, you can find ways to work productively with the customer and discover that they then become lifelong, loyal clients. Building relationships and taking responsibility for working with their behavior shows your employer how valuable you are to the organization. Moreover, it is important to retain customers, even the challenging ones, as it will help build your professional reputation when finding ways to work effectively with demanding customers.

Here are a few suggestions to maintain a customer-focused mindset. Listen to your customer. Acknowledge the customer’s experience. Apologize for any inconvenience and work diligently to resolve the problem or develop an alternative solution. These simple strategies will help you succeed and develop lasting connections with customers and employers in the future. For possible scenarios within the pharmacy, view the *Pharmacy Technician’s Role in Improving Customer Service* on-demand activity on www.PharmacyTechCE.org. This CPE provides examples through role play that clearly show how to handle difficult customers.

Celebrate Pharmacy Technicians and American Pharmacists Month

October is American Pharmacists Month and National Pharmacy Technician Day is October 28, 2014. This is a time to recognize the entire pharmacy team for the significant role we make to healthcare through improved medication use and advanced patient care. Pharmacy has expanded its role from a profession focusing on preparing and dispensing medications to medication therapy management services. We can help promote pharmacy and our continuously evolving profession by encouraging our peers and patients to know their pharmacy team!

The fourth Tuesday in October is dedicated to recognize the continuous effort pharmacy technicians make in all pharmacy practice settings throughout the year. Let’s celebrate your much appreciated contributions! Have you sent PTCB a photo of your pharmacy team yet? To submit your photo, type ‘**PHOTO for National Pharmacy Technician Day**’ in your email subject line, attach your photo, type your caption with the name and city location of your workplace, and send it to contact@ptcb.org. PTCB will post a random selection of photos on Facebook and add to the online photo album.

There are other ways to celebrate **National Pharmacy Technician Day**. Get Creative! No need for a big budget to make a memorable day. Take this time to host educational events for your patients or invite other healthcare professionals to visit the pharmacy. Decorate with banners, posters, and balloons to publicize your events and draw attention to your pharmacy! Whatever you do, **remember that it is your day!**