**Pharmacy Technician Role, Education, and Training**

*Sub-Domain: Practice-Focused*

# Implementation of a Pharmacy Technician Training Program within a Multi-Hospital Healthcare System

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## CASE OVERVIEW

We developed and implemented a robust ASHP/ Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)-accredited education and training program for pharmacy technicians to address pharmacy technician candidate shortages at Lee Health. The program was designed so that pharmacy technicians learn in a classroom environment, practice through simulated labs, and work in patient-centered pharmacies to improve knowledge and skills in various pharmacy areas.



The program can train up to 20 new pharmacy technicians annually, which is approximately the current hire/growth rate for pharmacy services at Lee Health. Given the robust experiential training involved in the program, graduates from this program required minimal training time and resources compared to external hires.

## KEY ELEMENTS

Key elements of success include the establishment of a clear goal to promote professional development, job growth, and specialization. Additional elements of success include the implementation of a Pharmacy Technician Career Ladder program to recognize and retain skilled pharmacy technicians; providing leadership advancement opportunities; and improving employee engagement and satisfaction.

## IMPACT ON PATIENT OUTCOMES

The launch of a robust ASHP/ACPE-accredited education and training program within our organization supported the utilization of pharmacy technicians in advanced roles in all practice settings to promote efficiency and improvement in access to patient care.

## PHARMACY AND PHARMACIST ROLES

The program's goal is to prepare future pharmacy technicians by promoting confidence, leadership, and professional skills to optimize patient outcomes through interdisciplinary medication management. After graduating from the program, pharmacy technicians have the skills to serve as liaisons of the pharmacy department on all decentralized nursing units. Under the supervision of decentralized pharmacists, technicians ensure optimal drug distribution to the nursing units. They support pharmacists by obtaining and clarifying prior to admission medication histories and allergy information from relevant sources. They expedite medication administration by mechanisms resolving issues with automated dispensing machines.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Invite lead pharmacy technicians and members of the Program Advisory Council to provide lectures to students.

Include education for pharmacy technician students on the technicians' role in the medication reconciliation process.

Do not overlook the time (average of 4 months) and commitment necessary to screen applicants (math competency assessment, English proficiency test, criminal background check, and drug screening).

## BUDGET & RESOURCE ALLOCATION

We leveraged existing department/system resources to support the program. We created a Program Advisory Council comprised of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians within the system to provide oversight, teaching, and management support. We established tuition cost and student program agreements to encourage program enrollment. Tuition and payment options should be established and approved by the Program Advisory Council prior to program initiation. Student Program Agreement should include expectations from students in regard to:

1. Program attendance requirements as established by the Program Advisory Council

2. Successful completion of all assigned program components

3. Assigned tuition value for the training program and expectation of candidate to work for the system for a 1-year period on a full-time or part-time basis if a pharmacy technician position is offered after the program

## FUTURE GOALS

We would like to include a designated medication safety section in the pharmacy technician training program to highlight how medication safety practices are important in all aspects of the pharmacy technicians' roles.

We would also like to perform ongoing review of Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam results and implement a standardized process to evaluate opportunities for improvement for upcoming courses.

Finally, we would like to involve graduates and current students of the pharmacy technician training program in the Program Advisory Council meetings.