

Pharmacy Technician Certification Board

Certification Program Changes

The Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) will implement changes to the PTCB Certification Program beginning in 2014 and continuing through 2020. These new changes will advance pharmacy technician qualifications by elevating PTCB's standards for certification and recertification.

PTCB requirements have remained largely unchanged since the organization's founding in 1995. The Board of Governors decisions to implement program changes were initiated by a 2011 summit focused on five areas related to pharmacy technicians: *Consumer Awareness, Resources, Education, State Policy and Testing (C.R.E.S.T.)*. Summit findings, combined with results from two profession-wide surveys, called for PTCB and the pharmacy profession to make decisive changes in certification standards.

PTCB is engaging stakeholders and the pharmacy community by collecting feedback on the new requirements through May 2013. Procedures, guidelines, and other details will be published closer to the planned implementation dates.

Program Changes

Certification

To qualify for PTCB certification, each new candidate must complete a(n):

- Criminal background check by 2014
- ASHP-accredited pharmacy technician education program by 2020

Recertification

To qualify for PTCB recertification, each Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPHT) must complete:

- One hour of medication safety continuing education (CE) by 2014
- Twenty hours of *pharmacy technician-specific* CE by 2015

The number of CE hours accepted will be modified for those earned:

- Via college/university coursework—from 15 to 10 hours by 2016
- Through in-services —from 10 to 5 hours in 2015, and from 5 to 0 in 2018

PTCB Certification Program

Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background checks will be required for new candidates applying for PTCB certification by 2014.

Description and Proposed Plan:

In a March 2012 survey, 88% of 17,400 respondents recommended that PTCB require background checks for technicians applying for the PTCB Certification Program. Many employers already require background checks as a condition of employment.

- Work with state boards of pharmacy and ASHP-accredited pharmacy technician education programs to determine how to synchronize existing systems and most efficiently implement background checks for new PTCB candidates.
- Collaborate with the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) to integrate and standardize systems.
- Conduct research regarding the processing and cost implications of background checks.

ASHP-accredited Pharmacy Technician Education Program

Successful completion of an American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) accredited pharmacy technician education program will become a requirement for initial PTCB certification.

Description and Proposed Plan:

Leaders in the profession have demonstrated a desire for pharmacy technicians to follow the same credentialing model as pharmacists by becoming certified and registered with the state. Pharmacists are required to graduate from an accredited pharmacy school before they sit for the NAPLEX board exam and become licensed by their state board of pharmacy.

The number of ASHP-accredited pharmacy technician education programs is growing in both community and hospital settings. ASHP-accredited programs include practical experience in addition to didactic course work, thereby providing well-rounded training for technicians. Many large employers have also begun developing their own training programs and seeking ASHP accreditation.

In the March 2012 survey, 78% of respondents agreed that 2020 is a reasonable year by which to implement accredited education.

- National pharmacy technician associations will be consulted to successfully complete this transition.
- This requirement will affect new individuals applying for national certification following the implementation date. It will not affect already certified pharmacy technicians applying for PTCB recertification or reinstatement.

PTCB Recertification Program

Medication Safety CE

As part of the 20 hours of CE currently required for PTCB recertification, CPhTs will need to complete one CE hour of medication safety by 2014, in addition to the one hour of law CE currently required.

Description and Proposed Plan:

Pharmacy technicians assist pharmacists with duties that impact patient care and safety. It is important that technicians continue to be educated on how their routine responsibilities shape the medication distribution system. By learning to identify potential errors in the system and how to report these, pharmacy technicians can affect the medication safety culture within pharmacies. 89% of respondents to the March 2012 survey supported this decision.

- Encourage pharmacy associations and other national CE providers to create medication safety CE programs specifically for pharmacy technicians.
- Highlight new medication safety CE programs on ptcb.org.

Pharmacy Technician-specific CE

PTCB will require all CE hours to be *pharmacy technician-specific* by 2015.

Description and Proposed Plan:

It is important for pharmacy technicians to be educated through programs designed specifically to address their responsibilities and knowledge requirements in the workplace. Many CE providers currently offer pharmacy-technician specific CE, with others looking to expand their offerings.

In order to qualify for this designation, CE programs must have pharmacy technician-specific objectives written for the course. An acceptable CE program may have two sets of objectives written for it, one for pharmacists and one for pharmacy technicians.

Pharmacy technician-specific objectives will be based upon the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) CE designations; however, PTCB will not require programs to be offered only by ACPE-accredited providers.

- Work with CE providers to encourage the creation of pharmacy technician- specific objectives for all CE programs.
- Continue to feature CE programs for pharmacy technicians on ptcb.org.

Acceptable CE: College Courses

PTCB will reduce the number of CE hours that can be earned via college/university coursework from 15 to 10 by 2016.

Description and Proposed Plan:

Due to the importance of pharmacy technicians completing technician-focused CE, leaders from the pharmacy profession encouraged greater emphasis on attaining technician-specific knowledge, with less allowance for broad academic courses.

PTCB will educate technicians eligible for recertification and reinstatement prior to their certification expiration dates.

Acceptable CE: In-Service Courses

PTCB will reduce the allowable number of CE hours to be earned through in-services from 10 to 5 in 2015, and from 5 to 0 in 2018.

Description and Proposed Plan:

It is important that pharmacy technicians be educated through quality, standardized CE programs. In-service CEs will be phased out to eliminate inconsistencies.

- Work with employers through the target implementation date to standardize the information being provided through in-services.
- Educate technicians eligible for recertification and reinstatement prior to their certification expiration dates.

Online Comment Period

PTCB is conducting an open comment period through May 2013, inviting members of the pharmacy community to share feedback and insight on implementing the new requirements. Visit ptcb.org for more information and access to the feedback form.

Open Forums

PTCB plans to work closely with educators, employers, boards of pharmacy, and state/national organizations to best implement these decisions. During the next three months, PTCB is asking for live feedback from pharmacy technicians and stakeholders at open forums across the country.

American Pharmacists Association (APhA) Annual Meeting and Exposition 2013

Session: Sunday, March 3 from 2:00-3:00 pm in room 153B, in Los Angeles, CA

California Pharmacists Association West Coast Pharmacy Exchange

Session: Sunday, March 17 from 5:00-6:00 pm, in Monterey, CA

South Carolina Society of Health-System Pharmacists (SCSHP) 2013 Annual Meeting

Sessions: Sunday, March 24 & Monday, March 25 from 3:30-4:30 pm, in Charleston, SC

Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW) Educational Conference

Session: Thursday, April 18 from 1:00-2:00 pm, in Madison, WI

North Dakota Pharmacists Association (NDPhA) Annual Convention

Session: Friday, April 26, in Dickinson, ND

Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists (TSHP) 2013 Annual Meeting

Session: Saturday, April 27 in Austin, TX