



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF THE HISTORY OF PHARMACY

Rennebohm Hall ■ University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy
777 Highland Avenue ■ Madison, WI 53705-2222 ■ 608.262.5378 ■ aihp@aihp.org

This slide presentation was compiled and produced by Robert McCarthy, Ph.D., Professor and Dean *Emeritus* at the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy for his class “The History of American Pharmacy.” Prof. McCarthy created this version of the slide talk for his class in the Spring of 2016.

This slide presentation was downloaded from the *Teaching the History of Pharmacy* section of the website of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy (<https://aihp.org/historical-resources/teaching-the-history-of-pharmacy/>) where a copy of the syllabus (.pdf) for Prof. McCarthy’s class is also available.

This .pdf copy of the slide presentation was shared with the permission of Prof. Robert McCarthy for the personal and educational use of interested readers.

Pharmacy Technicians

PHRX 4001W-002

The History of American Pharmacy

Spring 2016

The counting and pouring now often alleged to be the pharmacist's chief occupation will in time be done by technicians and eventually by automation. The pharmacist of tomorrow will function by reason of what he knows, increasing the efficiency and safety of drug therapy and working as a specialist in his own right. It is in this direction that pharmaceutical education must evolve without delay.

—Linwood F. Tice, D.Sc.,
*Dean, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and
Science (1966)*

Nomenclature

- Pharmacy Technicians
- Pharmacy Interns/Externs (Student Pharmacists)
- Pharmacy Clerks

Pharmacy Technicians

- The roles and responsibilities of pharmacy technicians have evolved significantly over the last 50 years.
- For many years, pharmacists were concerned that technicians might assume many of their duties (during the “count, lick, stick, & pour era”) and fought to limit their role; especially in community pharmacy, where their professional organization, the National Association of Retail Druggists (NARD; now the National Community Pharmacists Association [NCPA]) opposed formalizing the role.

Pharmacy Technicians

- 1974: NARD “stated its opposition to the use of technicians and other ‘subprofessionals of limited training’ out of concern for public safety.”

Pharmacy Technicians

- With the evolution of pharmaceutical care and patient-focused, clinical pharmacy services and medication therapy management (MTM), pharmacy technicians not only gained acceptance, but were seen as essential if pharmacists were to be relieved of many distributive functions so that they could focus on providing cognitive services to patients.
- 1966: Dean Linwood Tice, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy & Science suggested that the evolving role of pharmacists away from “count, lick, stick and pour” would soon lead to a shift in these distributive responsibilities to pharmacy technicians and an increased use of automation.

Pharmacy Technicians

- The earliest pharmacy technicians were informal positions without any formal training beyond what they received on-the-job.
- These early technicians were often high school graduates, with or without college training or a degree, who sought employment at a hospital or community pharmacy.
- As often has been the case in the evolution of pharmacy practice, the military services took a leadership role in formalizing the role of the technicians as far back as World War II; a number of these pharmacy technician veterans from WWII attended pharmacy school after the war.

Pharmacy Technicians

- Frank Reece
 - Pharmacist's Mate, USN Submarine Service, WWII
 - New England College of Pharmacy

Pharmacy Technicians

- In addition to pharmacists feeling threatened by these early technicians, there was often conflict between technicians and student pharmacists; students felt superior since they were receiving a formal education and were to become pharmacists; technicians felt they were permanent employees of the pharmacy and knew the daily tasks better than students who were only “temporary” staff (these technician/student tensions still exists in some settings today).

Pharmacy Technicians

- With the advent of clinical pharmacy in the 1960s and 1970s, hospital pharmacy was ahead of community pharmacy in formalizing the role of pharmacy technicians.
- 1968: The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare recommended that “pharmacist aides” receive formal training in junior colleges and other educational institutions.
- 1970s
 - 1975: The American Society of Hospital (now Health-System; ASHP) Pharmacists developed guidelines for the training of hospital pharmacy support staff.
 - 1979: The Massachusetts College of Pharmacy offered a hospital pharmacy technician training program.

Pharmacy Technicians

- 1979: The American Association of Pharmacy Technicians (AAPT) was founded by volunteer pharmacy technicians as the national organization representing pharmacy technicians, irrespective of practice site.
- 1980s
 - 1982: ASHP developed standards for the accreditation of pharmacy technician training programs.
- Several research studies demonstrated the effectiveness of pharmacy technicians and the benefit they provided in allowing pharmacists to shift their focus from distribution to cognitive services managing patient drug therapy.

Pharmacy Technicians

- Positive developments since the 1990s
 - National certification
 - Development of a model curriculum for pharmacy technician training
 - Greater recognition of pharmacy technicians in state pharmacy practice acts
 - Role of pharmacy technicians has become better defined in both hospital and community pharmacies
 - Greater acceptance by pharmacists
 - Expanding numbers and responsibilities
 - Changes in pharmacist-to-technician ratios (e.g. 1:1 to 1:2 or 1:3)

Pharmacy Technicians

- 1995: The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP), the American Pharmaceutical Association (APhA), the Illinois Council of Health-System Pharmacists (ICHHP), and the Michigan Pharmacists Association (MPA) established the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) and the PTCB Exam.
- PTCB is a voluntary national certification program for technicians.
- Another technician certification organization, The Pharmacy Technician Certification Program, is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA); its certifying exam is the Exam for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ExCPT).
- Passing either the PTCB Exam or ExCPT allows the candidate to earn the designation Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT).

Pharmacy Technicians

- 1991: Pharmacy Technician Educators Council (PTEC) was established as the professional organization for pharmacy technician educators.
 - The first annual PTEC meeting was held in 1992; the *Journal of Pharmacy Technology* was selected as PTEC's official journal.

Pharmacy Technicians Today

- A number of community colleges offer pharmacy technician programs.
- The scope of practice of pharmacy technicians varies based on state pharmacy laws and practice settings; for example, in some states and hospitals, technicians are allowed to check other technicians who have filled patient medication drawers (Is the pharmacist still liable in such situations?).
- Some states require pharmacy technicians to be registered and/or certified, others do not.
- It's not unusual for certified pharmacy technicians and pharmacy technicians who are not certified to work together at the same practice site.

Pharmacy Technicians Today

- Where do they work?
 - Hospitals and health-systems
 - Community pharmacies
 - Long-term care facilities
 - Home health care agencies
 - Clinic pharmacies
 - Mail order pharmacies
 - Pharmaceutical wholesalers
 - Managed care organizations
 - Health insurance companies
 - Medical computer software companies

Pharmacy Technicians Today

- Contemporary functions
 - Dispensing
 - Pharmacy administration
 - Inventory management
 - Disease management
 - Insurance related inquiries

Pharmacy Technicians Today

- Pharmacy Technician Opportunities at Walgreens (from their website)
 - Our pharmacy technicians receive some of the best hands-on training in the industry, learning and working alongside dedicated and compassionate professionals. In fact, the Walgreens Pharmacy Technician Training Program is accredited by the American Society of Health System Pharmacists (ASHP). This high-quality paid training program gives our pharmacy technicians a national certification granted by PTCB and fully prepares them for the exciting road ahead – working in a state-of-the-art environment with technology that leads the industry.
 - And for those who are interested in taking their technician experience in a different direction, we offer multiple career advancement opportunities through our community pharmacy technician and central pharmacy operations technician positions.
 - In most states, pharmacy technicians must be at least 18 years old.
 - [Community Pharmacy Technician](#)
 - [Central Pharmacy Operations Technician](#)
 - [Home Infusion Pharmacy Technician](#)
 - [Pharmacy Technician Externship Program](#)