Introduction to Pharmacy Technician Practice

Pharmacy technicians are being called on to expand their role in the pharmacy as more demands are being placed on the pharmacist. Pharmacy technician practice has evolved, and now technicians are required to be licensed by the state of Michigan, which includes a certification exam and maintaining continuing education.

What a Pharmacy Technician Provides

In their traditional role in community and hospital settings, technicians help pharmacists prepare prescription medications, provide customer service and perform administrative duties, including the following key functions (responsibilities depend on the regulations of the state in which they practice): processing prescription requests; collecting patient information and maintaining patient profiles; collecting information from the prescriber; receiving medication orders and refills through various means; entering medication orders in the pharmacy computer system; preparing and packaging medications and other health care products; and compounding of preparations, including as creams, ointments and suppositories, and intravenous and other sterile products.

In addition, utilizing technology in the pharmacy and with intervention by a pharmacist, technicians assess prescriptions for missing information, duplicate therapies, potential allergic reactions or drug interactions. In order to serve patients and the pharmacy in the most efficient way, pharmacy technicians can also help patients with billing and reimbursement questions, interacting with their insurance company to identify a solution.

Today, the role of pharmacy technicians is increasing and they can be seen practicing in many unique areas. In nontraditional roles, pharmacy technicians may practice in areas such as research, law enforcement, teaching, manufacturing, insurance, disease state management, hospice care, health care administration, pharmacy informatics and nuclear pharmacy. Pharmacy technicians, in collaboration with pharmacists, practice diligently to make sure that patients stay safe and that pharmacists have the support they need to improve each patient’s well-being.

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