Who is my audience?
- Pharmacy technicians
- Pharmacist
- Pharmacy managers/Supervisors
- Pharmacy Directors
- Others

Pharmacist Objectives
- Identify different approaches for retaining technicians
- Be able to design a promotion strategy for technicians
- Justify the importance of technician promotion
- Discuss evolution of the technician career including certification and additional responsibilities for technicians

Technicians Objectives
- Discuss the different roles of technicians in different industries of pharmacy
- Identify different ways to differentiate yourself in your technician career
- Explain the changes in the technician career
- Justify the importance of technician promotion

What is a pharmacy technician?
- A person or individual working in a pharmacy who is under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist that assists and supports in most pharmacy activities

Baptist Health Medical Center – Little Rock
- About 70 person department
- 24hr/day pharmacy services
- FTEs
- Technicians Per day: 12 day techs, 5 evening techs, 2 night techs
- Pharmacists per day: 13 day/evening PDs, 2 night PDs
Technician Job duties at BHMCLR

- Med dispensing
- Automated Dispensing Cabinet/Carousel experts
- IV/TPN compounding (no chemo)
- High speed repackaging technician
- Satellite pharmacy technicians
- Storeroom technician
- Narcotics technician
- Carousel Manager
- Buyer
- Reimbursement Coordinator
- 340B Coordinator

• 2013 statistic
- 350,000 practicing pharmacy technicians in the US

Current technician duties

- Dispensing
- Pharmacy administration
- Inventory management
- Disease management
- Insurance-related inquiries
- Compounding (TPNs/IVs)
- Participating in nursing-unit inspections
- Medication packaging

Current work environment for technicians

- Medication-inventory control specialist
- Intravenous admixture specialist
- Third-party billing specialist
- Pharmacy benefits manager
- Clinical pharmacy technician
- Pharmacy software specialist
- Supervisor with tech-check-tech responsibilities
- Pharmacy department manager
- Narcotic control technician
- Medicare Part D specialist
- Quality assurance/staff development
- Many others

Health System (Hospital) Pharmacy technicians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where Pharmacy Technicians Work (n = 1,200)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chain store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long-term care facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mail service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managed care facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational/vocational program</td>
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</tbody>
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Hospital Technicians in ARKANSAS

- 6,796 Pharmacy Technicians
- ~18-20% pharmacy technicians work in the hospital in Arkansas
- 186 hospitals in Arkansas

History Of Hospital Techs

- Late 1950’s
  - Pharmacy technicians began working in hospital settings and, with the help of ASHP, technician training programs were set up
  - State laws and regulations were developed to ensure technicians’ roles

- Late 1950’s-1969
  - Tasks of pharmacy technicians were laid out and distinguished from trained pharmacists
  - Pharmacy technicians started being used in community settings and were being trained on-the-job
1971
- ASHP commits to developing an accredited program for pharmacy technician training

1976
- Standards of practice, standards of competency, mechanisms to evaluate competency, and standards for training of hospital pharmacy "supportive personnel" were developed

1982
- The ASHP Regulations on Accreditation of Hospital Pharmacy Technician Training Programs was developed

1983
- The first technician training program was accredited by ASHP at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital

2004
- Ninety-four ASHP-accredited/accreditation-pending technician training programs were established

Hospital Technician Retention
Why is there turnover?

National average turnover rate ~15%

How can your health system improve technician retention?

Start at the beginning – hiring the right technicians

Pre interview Evaluation
- Pharmacy experience required or graduation from pharmacy technician program
- Look for applicants with degrees/Pre-pharmacy
- Pre interview HR survey
- Hiring from within

Pharmacy technician training programs In Arkansas
- Heritage school
- Remington school
- Arkansas State University – Beebe – ASHP accredited
- Mid-South Community College – ASHP accredited
- National Park Community College – ASHP accredited
- Other online schools

Accredited training programs by ASHP
- ASHP is the only nationally recognized non-governmental, non-profit pharmacy association that has been accrediting pharmacy residencies since 1962 and pharmacy technician training programs in the United States since 1983.
Who would you interview?
- 2 yrs exp at local retail pharmacy
- Some compounding experience
- Current Supervisor gives good recommendations
- Pre-interview survey score acceptable
- Graduated from NPCC – tech program

Interview Process
- Group interview
- Set of standard questions
- Require 3 references
- Formal evaluation by each interviewer based on:
  - Experience
  - Skills and knowledge
  - Communication skills
  - Responses to questions
  - Professional Appearance
  - References

Post interview
- Collect interviewers feedback
- Follow up with references
- Require shadowing
- Rank each candidate

Hired!
- Trainer/mentor program
- 45 day follow up required
- 90 day probation

Keeping your technicians
- Effective managers who care about each employee as a person, value their employees’ opinions, and provide staff with regular feedback on their performance
- Employee recognition
- Having a promotion strategy to have technicians can strive for improvement/advancement

Promotion strategies
- Technician promotion strategies
- An ASHP survey in August 2009 showed 56% of organizations offer career advancement opportunities for technicians.
- Is your pharmacy department have a promotion strategy in place for technicians? Pharmacist?
Benefits of a Technician Promotion Strategy

- Increased job satisfaction
- Incentives for technicians to improve skills and add responsibilities
- Motivation for improving performance, recognition
- Pay increases
- Lower technician turnover
- Increase skill of each technician
- More pharmacist time in patient care activities

Career Ladder

- General results
  - Lower technician turnover
  - Expansion of technician job responsibilities
  - Increased time for pharmacists’ clinical duties

BHMC Technician Career Ladder

Movement up technician career ladder based on being a National Certified Pharmacy Technician
Each step provides 10% increase in pay
Movement also based on compounding skills or responsibility in specific areas

National Certified Pharmacy Technician

- Arkansas state board technician requirements vs. Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination (PTCE)

- National Certification/Re-certification Program
  - Led by Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)
  - Has administered the Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination (PTCE) for the past 18 years
  - The PTCB certification is accepted as the national standard by more than half of all state boards of pharmacy
  - In order to gain the title of CPhT, a technician must pass the PTCE and complete 20 hours of CE credit within 2 years of original certification

- PTCE content outline:
  - 3 job function areas
    - 66% of the exam is assisting the pharmacist in serving patients
    - 22% of the exam is maintaining medication and inventory control systems
    - 12% of the exam is participating in the administration and management of pharmacy practice
Examples:

- **University of Kentucky Hospital**
  - **Grade 03—Pharmacy Technician I**
    - High school diploma
    - General chemistry knowledge
    - Basic algebra knowledge
    - Proficient reading/writing
    - One year work experience (preferably in related field) OR enrolled in College as first- or second-year pharmacy student

- **Grade 05—Pharmacy Technician III**
  - High school diploma
  - General chemistry knowledge
  - Basic algebra knowledge
  - Proficient reading/writing
  - Proficient in all job functions as described in job description
  - Current National Pharmacy Technician Certification
  - 24 months of previous pharmacy experience OR enrolled in College of Pharmacy as fourth-year student OR has successfully completed an ASHP accredited (or comparable) pharmacy technician training program and is nationally certified as a pharmacy technician in 12 months

- **Grade 07—Pharmacy Lead Technician**
  - High school diploma
  - General chemistry knowledge
  - Basic algebra knowledge
  - Proficient reading/writing
  - Proficient in all job functions as described in job description
  - Current National Pharmacy Technician Certification
  - 36 months of previous pharmacy experience
  - Supervisory experience preferred, but not required OR has successfully completed an ASHP accredited (or comparable) pharmacy technician training program and is nationally certified as a pharmacy technician in 12 months

Examples of technician tasks at different levels

Tech 1
- This entry level technician will assist the Pharmacist in medication distribution functions, compounding, and other duties to enhance hospital-wide patient care.
- Same as above, PLUS
- Participates in the training of new-hire Pharmacy Technician I
- Nationally certified
- IV compounding

Tech 2
- Same as above, PLUS
- Responsibility for specific area or workflow
- Assists in the preparation of presentations for committees
- Performs quality assurance assignments as directed

Other promotion strategies

- Technicians w/ IPPE students
- Promoting growth/involvement
- Cross training opportunities

Expansion of Tech Careers

- Employment of pharmacy technicians is expected to increase by 32 percent from 2010 to 2020
- Growing much faster than the average for all occupation

What’s next in a hospital technician career?
Possible changes

- Required PTCB certification
- Tech to tech check
- More clinical roles - clinical extenders

Required certification

- Emily’s Law
  - 2006
    - Emily Jerry was 18 months old when she was diagnosed with a curable form of cancer. She went through many rounds of chemo and surgeries that were successful. During her final round of chemo, a technician prepared a base solution of 33.4% saline instead of the normal 0.9% saline solution. The error was not caught by the technician or the pharmacist and Emily received the solution. As a result of this error, Emily fell into a coma and passed away three days later, shortly after her second birthday.

Tech-Check-Tech

- TCT is the checking of a technician’s order filling accuracy by another technician rather than a pharmacist
- This allows specially trained pharmacy technicians to perform final verification on refill medications
- Tech-Check-Tech (TCT) is a program that 16 states are currently implementing and other states may employ in the near future

Institutional practices using TCT have layers of safety built in that reduce the possibility of dispensing errors
- Example: In hospitals, product barcodes are scanned while gathering the medication, as well as before placing it into the ADS
- TCT reduces the need for pharmacists to perform technical functions, allowing their time to be focused on direct patient care and clinical services

2009

- As a result of this error, Ohio developed Emily’s Law:
  - “Only pharmacists, pharmacy interns, or pharmacy technicians who are working in a pharmacy may compound drugs, package or label drugs, or prepare intravenous drugs.”
  - Parameters for pharmacy technicians covered by this law:
    - Individual who is at least 18 years of age
    - Received a high school diploma or its equivalent
    - Completed a competency examination approved by the Ohio State Board of Pharmacy (passing either the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board or the Institute for Certification of Pharmacy Technicians examination)
    - Fulfilled the requirement of a criminal background check revealing no prior felonies

With the exception of North Dakota, all of the TCT programs in the states listed are in institutional settings only

A main reason that TCT has been limited to institutional settings is because “an allowable setting must have a licensed health professional to provide additional, independent verification before medication administration”
Technicians who are allowed to do the final check must complete education or specialized training that varies from state-to-state. Some training/education requirements for TCT:

- Technicians who meet a minimum required experience in a unit-dosed distribution system can become “tech-checkers” by completing educational and practical training modules, followed by a confirmation period.
- Technicians must achieve a minimum accuracy rate before they are permitted to independently perform final verification.
- TCT programs must have quality assurance programs established.

Accuracy of technician vs pharmacist:

- Both display high level of accuracy in dispense verification and error detection.
- Limits to studies include time frame, severity of errors or possibility of honeymoon phase for technicians.

Use of technician in clinical pharmacy:

- Medication reconciliation
- Discharge medication counseling
- Patient interview
- Order entry clean up
- Clinical data collection
- Drug use policy enforcement

Conclusion:

- History of technician career
- Hiring and retaining good technician
- Certification and Accredited programs
- Upcoming possible changes in tech career