

Future Trends in Pharmacy Technician Certification and Registration Requirements

From state to state, the registration requirements for becoming a pharmacy technician vary substantially. Currently, sixteen states (including Montana) require prospective technicians to pass a national certification exam. Only three states require the successful completion of an accredited education program. While over 80% of states regulate the profession in some fashion, six states do not require any form of registration, licensure, or certification for pharmacy technicians. In Montana, technician applicants must be 18 years of age or older, have a high school diploma or equivalent, complete the application process, and pass a board-approved pharmacy technician certification exam.

At a national level, many Pharmacy organizations strongly support the standardization of registration and certification requirements for technicians. Some of the professional groups involved in the initiative include the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), American Society of Health System Pharmacists (ASHP), Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy (CCP), Pharmacy Technician Educators Council (PTEC), American Pharmacists Association (APhA), American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP), and Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners (JCCP).

These organizations recommend the adoption of uniform state registration or licensure criteria. Additionally, it is recommended the certification requirements for pharmacy technicians include successful completion of an accredited pharmacy training program as well as passing a national certification exam.

Standardizing pharmacy technician training and certification by the year 2015 is highly supported at a national level to improve patient safety and to aid in the evolution of Pharmacy practice. At a state level, the implementation will pose challenges for state boards of pharmacy, employers, and applicants.

In Montana, many of the recommendations are satisfied with the current registration requirements. However, meeting the education recommendation would necessitate further development of state education programs.

Currently in Montana, there are several Pharmacy Technician education programs. Most are associated with the Montana University System. Each program has different curricula and unique features. Pharmacy technician education programs are offered by Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, Montana State University –College of Technology in Great Falls, University of Montana –College of Technology in Missoula, University of Montana – College of Technology in Helena and the Adult Education Center in Billings. Two of these programs offer on-line coursework options, which include the COT programs in Missoula and Great Falls. Of the programs in Montana, the COT in Missoula is the only ASHP-accredited program.

Compared to other states, Montana has most of the national recommendations in place for technician registration and certification. However, to reach all of the goals, an expansion and accreditation of pharmacy technician educational programs in Montana would be necessary.

For more information on this topic and technician education, please consult the following websites.

ASHP recently launched a website for those interested in a career as a pharmacy technician.

[www. Pharmtechinfocenter.com](http://www.Pharmtechinfocenter.com)

Tech Training Directory can assist those looking for accredited programs in the U.S.

<http://accred.ashp.org/aps/pages/directory/technicianProgramDirectory.aspx>

RU Ready assessment tool can be used for those programs considering and preparing for the accreditation process.

<http://www.ashp.org/Import/ACCREDITATION/TechnicianAccreditation/StartingaTrainingProgram/RUReadyTool.aspx>

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