Frequently Asked Questions: Pharmacy Technician

Pharmacy technicians assist pharmacists in dispensing medications. A pharmacy technician’s job duties include providing medication and other health care products to patients and working with third party and doctors' offices in resolving adjudication of patients' insurance or state program.

A Pharmacy Technician’s main responsibility is filling prescriptions according to doctors’ orders. This generally includes retrieving drugs in the correct dosage form and strength, measuring the appropriate amount of drug and producing a prescription label. Pharmacy Technicians work with drugs to be administered orally, topically, for the eye, nose, etc. Depending upon the practice setting, a Pharmacy Technician is also involved in the mixture of drugs for intravenous use.

Pharmacy Technicians may work in retail pharmacies, mail order pharmacies, home infusion pharmacies, long term care facilities, hospitals, clinics, pharmacy benefit managers and large industrial complexes. The demand for Pharmacy Technicians continues to grow with demand expected to increase substantially through 2014. This high demand is the result of the constant availability of new drugs, the national shortage of registered pharmacists, the establishment of certified pharmacy technicians and the aging population.

Jobs in this field in Syracuse pay $20,000 - $25,000.

What is the course description?
This comprehensive 50-hour course will prepare students to enter the pharmacy field and take the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board’s PTCB examination. Course content includes medical terminology specific to the pharmacy, reading and interpreting prescriptions, and defining drugs by generic and brand names. Students will learn dosage calculations, I.V. flow rates, drug compounding, dose conversions, dispensing of prescriptions, inventory control, and billing and reimbursement. Classes meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Only two missed classes are permitted.

What are the course pre-requisites?
High school math and science classes. A high school diploma or GED is required to sit for the PTCB Pharmacy Technician certification exam.

How do I register for the course and what is the refund policy?
You can register online at www.sunyocc.edu/community, by mail or fax, or in person. The class is limited to 25 students. Course refunds will be granted up to three business days prior to class start date.

What is the course tuition fee?
Tuition is $999. Payment can be made by cash, check or money order made payable to OCC, or Visa, MasterCard, and Discover Card credit cards. The course fee includes the class textbook. This course is not eligible for Federal Student Aid (FASFA).
Are there any additional fees?
If you sit for the certification exam, there is a separate fee of $129 charged by Pharmacy Technician Certification Board.

What is PTCB?
The Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) maintains a national certification program that enables pharmacy technicians to work with pharmacists to offer safe and effective patient care. PTCB develops, maintains, promotes, and administers a National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) accredited certification program for pharmacy technicians. PTCB provides certification and recertification programs and services that offer pharmacy technicians an opportunity to demonstrate a mastery of skills across practice settings.

What is certification?
Certification is the process by which a non-governmental association or agency grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by that association or agency.

What are the requirements for certification?
Individuals who meet all eligibility requirements and who successfully pass the Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam (PTCE) become a Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT) and may use the credential "CPhT" after their name. A certificate and wallet card are sent to new CPhTs approximately six to eight weeks after passing the PTCE. Certification is valid for two years and must be renewed every two years.

Why should I become certified?
Pharmacy technicians certified by PTCB report higher earnings and more promotion opportunities than non-certified pharmacy technicians. When surveyed, CPhTs also indicated the following benefits to becoming certified: enhanced self-worth, improved job satisfaction, increased knowledge, and the ability to make a positive impact on patient care. Employers trust that with PTCB certification, the CPhTs they work with have met predetermined qualifications.

What happens to my certification if I move to another state?
PTCB's certification is valid nationwide. If you move out of state, your credential moves with you. However, the regulations to work in a pharmacy as a pharmacy technician vary from state to state. Contact your state board of pharmacy to review state practice regulations or visit the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) for more information.