

From: [Jim Miller](#)
To: [Witkowski, Terry \[IBPE\]](#)
Cc: [Funk, Andrew \[IBPE\]](#); [Jorgenson, Debbie \[IBPE\]](#)
Subject: Re: FW: NPM site feedback regarding PTCB 2020 requirement
Date: Thursday, September 17, 2015 1:41:10 PM

Yes, I think this is valuable input and the discussion regarding technician training and certification will be something the bop needs to stay on top of. Thanks
Jim

On Wed, Sep 16, 2015 at 3:12 PM, Witkowski, Terry [IBPE] <Terry.Witkowski@iowa.gov> wrote:

Jim,

Is this something you want distributed to the Board at the November meeting?

Therese (Terry) Witkowski

Executive Officer

Iowa Board of Pharmacy

terry.witkowski@iowa.gov

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From: Megan Myers [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 16, 2015 3:08 PM
To: Jim Miller
Cc: Anthony Pudlo; Witkowski, Terry [IBPE]
Subject: NPM site feedback regarding PTCB 2020 requirement

Dear Jim,

I had an opportunity through conference calls and a meeting last week to seek input from both pharmacists and technicians at New Practice Model sites regarding the proposed requirement for technicians to complete an accredited program in order to be eligible for the PTCB certification exam.

Attached are a compilation of comments. My impression from the group is overall this requirement is not supported as is – but if PTCB is able to demonstrate proof of program quality and if completing a program could help develop more career opportunities/expanded roles for technicians (aka a career ladder) then there might be more support for this requirement.

Please let me know if there is anything you would like clarified, or want any additional feedback from the group.

Sincerely,

Megan

Megan Myers

New Practice Model Project Manager

Iowa Pharmacy Association

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The NPM group recognizes a need for technician education but does not support required graduation from an accredited ASHP program for several reasons:

Feedback from Pharmacists:

1) There is a concern about the quality of the programs currently in place – pass rates for PTCB are still low even when prospective technicians graduate from a program. Pharmacists do not believe the quality is there and have seen more success with training technicians themselves. Having access to a quality program in the area is also a concern. Sites can't support a program that can't prove its value. There needs to be data to support program quality. If a program does become required, it should be affordable.

2) This requirement may set the bar too high for entry level technician positions. Education through an accredited program may be beneficial for some of the expanding roles for technicians (TCT, telepharmacy, etc...) but it is not necessary for the traditional entry level functions (Rx entry/cashier/filling). The roles and responsibilities of the technician in the pharmacy must be considered. PTCB exam is intended to be a minimal competency exam and should mirror the responsibilities for entry level duties in various practice settings.

3) Most entry level technicians do not intend to make pharmacy a career path. It's often a stepping stone to other careers in health care. The growth potential to make being a pharmacy technician a career path needs to be considered.

4) This requirement may make it even more difficult to attract and retain technicians. Sites are already having difficulty finding qualified technicians and this requirement may make the shortage even worse.

5) Training needs to be site specific. It would be better if pharmacists could set up internships at the local level where technicians in training could earn CE towards certification requirements.

Additionally: ND has a similar requirement. Problems observed even when the company covers tuition cost of program participation are as follows:

1) Successful completion rate of the program is relatively low.

2) This has resulted in a decreasing number of technicians entering the workforce which has created a bidding war to hire technicians.

3) Due to the bidding war, technician salaries have increased to double what is found in other markets, but their job responsibilities have not changed.

4) This requirement has created a barrier to entry level positions.

An alternative approach may be to incorporate employee training into the pharmacy curriculum so pharmacists are better prepared to train employees.

Sites have seen technicians struggle with the PTCB exam in the last year or so and have noticed the dip in pass-rates.

Feedback from currently certified pharmacy technicians:

1) This requirement would have been a barrier to several of the technicians on our conference call. They consider the cost (avg. cost of \$2,500) to be a significant barrier. The time needed to invest in a program would have also been barrier as many of them were looking for a job at the moment and needed the income.

2) Right now technicians see little opportunity for promotion or climbing a career ladder. Therefore the return on investment for paying for formal education is minuscule.

- 3) The technicians stated that hands on learning/on-the-job training is more effective for their current role than formal education. Formal education would be a reasonable expectation for expanded pharmacy roles such as tech-check-tech but should not be a requirement for certification.
- 4) Technicians recognize the potential benefit of having more competent help at the entry-level position through structured technician training including having a realistic expectation of the stressful high-paced environment. This could potentially help decrease turnover from new hires leaving a job due to stress. But there was also a concern that making it a requirement would decrease the already scarce applicant pool.