



Report of the Task Force on Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs

NOTE: The NABP Executive Committee accepted all the recommendations of this task force with the following exception:

- **Recommendation 4 - Although the Executive Committee agreed to the concept, they felt it more appropriate for NABP to convene a task force from time to time when necessary to develop and maintain national standards instead of commissioning a standing committee.**

Members Present:

Susan Ksiazek (NY), *chair*; Kevin Borchert (NE); Lee Ann Bundrick (SC); Edith Goodmaster (CT); Earl McKinstry (SD); Michael Podgurski (PA); Lorie Rice (CA); James Spoon (OK); Jeanne Waggener (TX); Ann Zweber (OR).

Others Present:

Michael A. Burlison, *Executive Committee liaison*; Carmen A. Catizone, Melissa Madigan, Chris Siwik, *NABP staff*.

Guests:

Jeffrey W. Wadelin, *Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)*; Melissa Murer Corrigan, *Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)*; Janet Teeters, *American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)*.

Introduction:

The Task Force on Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs met October 6-7, 2009, at the Hyatt Rosemont in Rosemont, IL.

This task force was established in response to Resolution 105-5-09, Board of Pharmacy Approval of Pharmacy Technician Educational and Training Programs, which was approved by the NABP membership at the Association's 105th Annual Meeting in May 2009.

Review of the Task Force Charge:

Task force members reviewed their charge and accepted it as follows:

1. Review the existing state requirements for technician education and training, requirements for national technician training program accrediting organizations, such as the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education Core Competencies;
2. Recommend national standards for technician education and training programs and encourage boards of pharmacy to recognize them.

Recommendation 1: NABP Should Encourage Boards of Pharmacy to Require as an Element of Pharmacy Technician Certification Completion of an Education and Training Program that Meets Minimum Standardized Guidelines

The task force recommends NABP work with the states to require, as an element of pharmacy technician certification, the completion of an education and training program by all pharmacy technicians. Such programs should meet minimum standardized guidelines in the interest of the public health and improved patient care and safety.

Background:

Task force members discussed the information provided by guest participants and acknowledged there is little uniformity among states when it comes to pharmacy technician education and training requirements. The ASHP Accreditation Standard for Pharmacy Training Programs provides uniformity on a voluntary basis (except in South Carolina where all pharmacy technician training programs must be ASHP accredited), but many programs across the country are not accredited.

Task force members discussed the evolving role of pharmacists and, paralleling that, the evolving role of pharmacy technicians. It is these evolving roles that have created the need for a model curriculum and core guidelines for pharmacy technician education and training programs, and it will be these consistent pharmacy technician education and training standards that will have a positive impact on public safety and the practice of pharmacy.

Recommendation 2: NABP Should Encourage Boards of Pharmacy to Require as an Element of Pharmacy Technician Certification Completion of an Accredited Education and Training Program by 2015

The task force recommends that state boards of pharmacy, by 2015, require all certified pharmacy technicians to have completed an accredited education and training program.

Background:

Task force members agreed that a crucial step in the evolution of the practice of pharmacy would be for all states to require, by 2015, completion of an accredited education and training program as a condition of pharmacy technician certification. This target date, which members agreed was vital to this recommendation, is consistent with the Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners “Future Vision of Pharmacy Practice 2015.”

Recommendation 3: NABP Should Assist in Developing a National Accreditation System for Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs that is Based within the Profession of Pharmacy and Utilizes a Single Accrediting Agency by 2015

The task force recommends that NABP assist in developing a national accreditation system for pharmacy technician education and training programs. The task force also strongly recommends that a single accrediting agency is utilized and that the program is developed by an established organization within the profession of pharmacy.

Background:

Task force members discussed information provided by the guest participants and concluded that a national accreditation system should be developed for pharmacy technician education and training programs. It was acknowledged that it would best serve public protection, if NABP participated in the development of such a system. Task force members noted that other organizations have been established outside the profession of pharmacy to develop accreditation systems for pharmacy. Members expressed concern that these organizations may move into this area and not have the knowledge or background in pharmacy to ensure appropriate standards are met.

Recommendation 4: NABP Should Commission a Standing Committee to Develop and Maintain National Standards for Pharmacy Practice to Assist Boards in Defining the Evolving Roles of Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians and Technician Education and Training Program Standards

The task force recommends that the NABP Executive Committee approve funding for, and appoint key stakeholders to, a standing committee and work with interested stakeholders to develop and maintain national standards for pharmacy practice. The development of such national standards will assist boards in defining the current roles of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, as well as education and training program standards.

Background:

Task force members discussed in-depth the evolving role of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and the need for national pharmacy practice standards to help define those roles. Members unanimously agreed that practice standards for pharmacy technicians are necessary for the development of education and training program standards and that it is crucial to have such program standards issued by a single accrediting body.

The task force concurred on the importance of input from all key stakeholders when developing these standards. Key stakeholders would include representatives from state boards of pharmacy, relevant government agencies, pharmacy associations, and accreditation bodies. The committee would convene to develop standards for pharmacy practice based upon the changing roles of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians with the goal of high quality patient care and positive patient outcomes. Task force members recognized the importance of NABP in the development of the practice standards, noting how standardized pharmacy practice processes and positive patient outcomes are in alliance with the NABP Mission Statement.

Task force members agreed that a task analysis, such as that used to develop the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination blueprint, would be necessary for the development of education and training program standards. Members agreed that the task analysis performed by PTCB could also be used in this capacity.

Recommendation 5: NABP Should Encourage ACPE and ASHP to Work Collaboratively to Develop an Accreditation System for Pharmacy Technician Education and Training

Programs that Reflects All Pharmacy Practice Settings and, if Feasible, to Consolidate the Activities into One Accrediting Body, Preferably ACPE

The task force recommends the development of an accreditation system for pharmacy technician education and training programs that is overseen by one accrediting body for uniformity.

Background:

Task force members discussed the current accreditation process in place for pharmacist educational programs and for pharmacy technician education and training programs, noting that ACPE accredits pharmacist educational programs, but does not accredit those for pharmacy technicians. Members reviewed the ASHP accreditation process and acknowledged that there exists the misperception that ASHP accreditation is seen as a hospital model and not applicable to all pharmacy technician practice settings. Task force members determined that any newly established pharmacy technician education and training program standards should parallel those ACPE has developed for pharmacist educational programs and ASHP has in place for technician educational programs.

Recommendation 6: NABP Should Encourage PTCB to Change The Process by which it Determines Who is Qualified to Sit for Its Examination to Include Completion of an Accredited Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Program and High School Diploma or GED Verification

The task force recommends that NABP communicate to PTCB, pursuant to their request for feedback, to strengthen their current processes for determining who is qualified to sit for the Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam (PTCE) by requiring, prior to the exam, completion by the applicant of an accredited education and training program specific for pharmacy technicians and by verifying that the applicant has received a high school diploma or GED.

Background:

Task force members acknowledged that many consumers have the perception that pharmacy technicians have some level of formal education and training, as well as the fact that many consumers are unaware that, in some states, pharmacy technicians may actually have little or no education or training. Members also discussed the qualifications needed for an applicant to sit for the PTCE and agreed that, in the interest of protecting the public, such qualifications should be made more stringent. Task force members stressed the importance of NABP working with PTCB to strengthen the process used to qualify applicants for PTCE and subsequent certification so as to raise the standard of practice for pharmacy technicians.

Recommendation 7: NABP Should Encourage PTCB to Provide NABP with Information on its Certified Pharmacy Technicians so that NABP may Enhance the Pharmacy Technician Data Contained in the NABP Clearinghouse to Provide the Information Necessary for the State Boards of Pharmacy to Protect the Public Health.

The task force recommends that NABP encourage PTCB to share with NABP the information it maintains on pharmacy technicians so that NABP may fortify the information contained in the NABP Clearinghouse to include additional pharmacy technician licensure, registration,

certification, and disciplinary information for the benefit of the state boards of pharmacy and the public health.

Background:

Task force members discussed and supported a recommendation from the 2008 Task Force on Standardized Pharmacy Technician Education and Training that encourages state boards of pharmacy to report pharmacy technician disciplinary information to the NABP Clearinghouse and requests that NABP expand its licensure transfer program to include pharmacy technicians. Members stressed that this effort can be significantly furthered with the addition of information provided by PTCB.

Members also felt that the NABP Clearinghouse, with certification, disciplinary action, and registration or licensure information for pharmacy technicians, would positively impact the practice of pharmacy by ensuring a national pool of pharmacy technicians that have achieved a standard level of competency and professionalism.

Recommendation 8: NABP Should Encourage ASHP to Revise Its Current Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs to Require Accredited Providers to Inform Potential Program Applicants of Applicable State Requirements for Registration or Licensure

The task force recommends that ASHP revise their current standards to ensure that an accredited program provides notification of state requirements for registration or licensure to applicants so they are aware that, in certain circumstances, they could be excluded from registration or licensure.

Background:

Members discussed an increasing number of instances in their states where individuals who have completed or neared completion of a training program have applied for pharmacy technician registration or licensure, but were found ineligible due to certain prohibitions, such as prior criminal convictions. Members felt it was necessary, in the interest of fairness to applicants, for programs to inform them of circumstances where they would not be eligible for registration or licensure regardless of program completion.