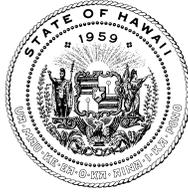


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January 2014

**PHARMACY TECHNICIAN SURVEY RESULTS**

Dear Hawaii Pharmacies:

Thank you for taking the time to complete the pharmacy technician survey that was faxed to you in December 2013. We have compiled the responses received and the Board of Pharmacy ("Board") considered the results at their January 2014 meeting. The Board referred the information to the Laws and Rules Committee for a recommendation.

Here are the results of the survey:

250+ surveys faxed to Hawaii pharmacies

Responses received by Pharmacy Settings:      **81** retail              **15** institution/other

How many of the following are working/employed at your pharmacy:

Total # of pharmacy technicians	<b>423</b> (267 retail, 156 institution/other)
Total # of pharmacy interns	<b>35</b> (32 retail, 3 institution/other)
Total # of cashiers	<b>56</b> (56 retail)
Total # of other pharmacy personnel	<b>42</b> (19 retail, 23 institution/other)
Total # of pharmacist	<b>341</b> (182 retail, 159 institution/other)

Of your Pharmacy Technicians, how many hold national certification or have no formal pharmacy technician education/training but received on-the-job training (OTJ):

National certification	<b>87/267</b> retail, 57/156 institution/other
OTJ	<b>167/267</b> retail, 73/156 institution/other

Should the Board "regulate" pharmacy technicians?      Yes **56** (46 retail, 15 institution/other)\*  
No **38** (28 retail, 4 institution/other)

The following are some of the "comments" to the "yes" responses that pharmacy technicians should be regulated:

- Ensure the competency of the pharmacy technician in order to protect the patient.
- PTCB to check for ability and understanding
- Technicians need to be held accountable for duties performed, confidently, accurately and honestly.
- Brings credibility to the pharmacy technician worker.
- Minimum standard and CE

- Registration, certification not necessary as OTJ training will be sufficient. Registration to show some experience and meets requirements like felonies, residency, etc.
- Certification requires a higher degree of knowledge
- Further training and better prepared when starting new job.
- Qualify them for better pay.
- Consistency and safety.
- Guarantee minimum competency
- But not required
- Ensure customers/patients get the best possible service
- Less training and errors made.
- Better understanding of how pharmacy works
- Techs should have prior pharmacy experience before being allowed to step foot into a pharmacy
- Because we do most of the work
- Defer theft and diversion
- Better recognition would be appreciated
- Take the job more seriously
- Pharmacy techs are an integral part of a health care team. Their responsibilities are expanding and there needs to be a way to regulate their practice for the safety of patients.
- It is a job that requires much responsibility, accuracy, compassion and education. They should then get paid more.
- Creates standard baseline education
- Higher understanding and application, higher accuracy in typing and reading prescriptions, strong calculation skills
- It is a skilled position
- Ease burden of training. Ensure applicant is capable of performing the mathematics necessary for the job. We are providing health care services, we should set some minimum standards in the interest of public safety.
- If you have someone work in the pharmacy that has not been trained or received certification, they are more likely to make errors, creating more stress on the supervising pharmacist and if the error is missed, become dangerous to the patient.
- Standardizes the expectations of the technicians.
- With the growing need for pharmaceutical care and interventions at retail level, the skills required to process, handle drugs and dispense medications require an education in pharmacy. To better our service, prevent mistakes and give better patient care, our support staff should be certified nationally as well. This will show they are dedicated to their craft and committed to staying in this occupation.
- Falling reimbursements require pharmacies to move tasks that do not require a pharmacist license be moved to non-pharmacists. Therefore more knowledgeable auxiliary staff is needed before a med error occurs because of a knowledge gap.
- But only if confirm minimal proficiency.

The following are some of the "comments" to the "No" responses that pharmacy technicians should NOT be regulated:

- Most of my technicians were trained by me from zero background. We can't afford to pay people with fancy titles anyway.
- Experience supersedes certification and/or certification program should be more challenging.
- Have interviewed many certified technicians who are unprepared to enter pharmacy other non-certified technicians are more than capable of doing pharmacy work.
- The pharmacy technician training programs are general and teach in-patient skills not needed in retail pharmacy. I find that the certified technicians we have employed over the years do not bring added value with their education but the education has actually hindered their input in the pharmacy because they think they know how to do things and are less open to learning versus those we train 100% OJT. My best techs are not certified. Pharmacist to Technician ratios are bad for the patient and pharmacy. Each pharmacy is different, busy times vary and

automation (phone, IVR, robots, etc. cash register & CPE efficiencies vary). RPh to tech ratios if made mandatory would bring down efficiencies and raise costs.

- It will be harder to find people to staff these positions unless they are offered higher pay which is not in our immediate control.
- Per my understanding of board rules these technicians cannot perform any work in area without a licensed pharmacist present. It is unclear the need to certify techs when it is still ultimately pharmacist that is responsible for the accuracy of the dispensing of medication and to recheck techs work.
- State HR does not have a pharmacy technician classification and our Para-Medical Assistant III will be adversely impacted if the technician class does not include this group when considering certification. I believe a review needs to be done to evaluate current employees and their educational and training background needs to determine how the implementation or grandfathering in of this current class of workers prior to implementation of certification, because there may be significant others that will be adversely impacted by this requirement (not to mention employers). Review of job performance and incidences of mishandling medication should be reviewed to determine whether certification is warranted or just part of national trend to develop "best practices" to support certification or is incidence inconclusive to support regulating this class of workers.
- Not necessary since some of the best technicians are not certified.
- The majority of technician responsibilities involve troubleshooting insurance coverage issues. Certification would be suited for institutional settings, but only for skills such as IV admixture and other similar skills.
- Although proper training would help a lot. This is a job that can be learned on the job and through years of experience.
- Certification does not increase a technician's duties. They still won't be able to take new prescription, do transfers, etc. Certification will only cost them money from their already small salaries. I have had students from a technician program and they were no better than those I've trained.
- The cost of formal educational/training is too expensive.
- Not needed as not professionals
- The pharmacist is ultimately responsible for what goes in the prescription order, what is printed, what gets filled and when it goes out, not the technician.
- Already over regulated
- On-site training should be good enough
- Unless there will be a mandatory pay raise for registered technicians at the retail level it will not be worth the cost to maintain licensure nor would it be worth the annual/biennial fess for the technicians.
- With all the HIPPA & FWA training requirements certification is not needed. We already provide a lot of training. Also makes it hard to hire new technicians. Cost is a factor also.
- Most of the best techs are self-motivated and credentialing would serve little purpose but add expense.
- It would be of no benefit to our pharmacy. Given our location, it would make it very difficult to find qualified employees who are compatible with our work environment.
- It is ultimately the pharmacist's responsibility what goes on in the pharmacy so unless the technicians will be legally responsible for what they do there is no point. (I have seen certified technicians from other states who were terrible!)
- Leave it up to the pharmacy – my 2 "non-certified" on the job technicians perform much better than my "certified" technician. It is up to the pharmacy and pharmacist to train.
- In my experience technicians who have completed the accredited technician course do not have the aptitude or knowledge of the profession therefore it is a waste of time and money and a barrier to competent care.
- Employer responsibility, protocol licensed technicians voluntary register
- Can't beat on the job training.
- Depends what the purpose would be – not sure what the certification means – it doesn't guarantee tech works well in the work environment. Same way pharmacist license doesn't mean pharmacist works well in work environment. I take a non certified tech that works well in the work environment over a certified tech that does not work as well.

- Our company has hired both non-trained and certified pharmacy techs. In our opinion, we have had better experiences with technicians who are on the job trained.
- Our company already has a program to train technicians and assigns the techs required CE's pertaining to law, medication errors and drug diversion.
- Our techs are adequately trained within our pharmacy. We utilize "Learnet" a computer site that keeps all techs informed as well as daily emails to keep techs current regarding new/updated information.

In addition to the information received in the survey, the Board also considered the following information from the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy 2014 Survey of Pharmacy Law:

# of states that "license" technicians:	8
# of states that "register" technicians:	34
# of states that "certify" technicians:	8

Technician training requirements:	36
Technician exam requirements:	21
Technician CE requirements:	18