



California State Board of Pharmacy

400 R Street, Suite 4070, Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 445-5014
Fax (916) 327-6308
www.pharmacy.ca.gov

STATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
GRAY DAVIS, GOVERNOR

Contact Person: Patricia Harris
(916) 445-5014

PHARMACY MANPOWER TASK FORCE

A working group to ensure patient access to pharmacists' care and prescription services.

June 8, 2001

**USC, SCHOOL OF PHARMACY
1985 Zonal Avenue, Room 104
Los Angeles, CA 90089**

9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND IS BEING HELD IN A BARRIER-FREE FACILITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.

NOTED STARTING TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE AND MAY CHANGE TO EITHER AN EARLIER OR LATER TIME DEPENDING ON THE DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

AGENDA

THE PUBLIC IS ENCOURAGED AND WILL BE PROVIDED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE TASK FORCE ON EACH AGENDA ITEM.

I. Opening Remarks 9:30 a.m.
Steve Litsey, President

II. Overview/Summary on Task Force Progress 9:35 a.m.
Lindle Hatton, Facilitator

III. Facilitated Discussion on Merits of Proposed Solutions 9:45 a.m.

Lunch 12 noon

III. Facilitated Discussion on Merits of Proposed Solutions 1:30 p.m.
(Continued)

IV. Future Meeting Dates – Timeline 3:30 p.m.
Meeting Wrap-Up

V. Adjournment 4:00 p.m.

**CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF PHARMACY
MANPOWER TASK FORCE MEETING APRIL 27, 2001
COMMENTS FROM PANEL AND AUDIENCE**

**Solution C-1:
Expand the duties of the technician.**

Expand duties – Arguments For

- If technicians are tested, could relieve pharmacists – does it?
- Highly trained, competent technician makes the workload smoother.
Applicable regardless of setting.
- Appropriate quality assurance could lead to alleviation of manpower problem.

Expand duties – Arguments Against

- Risk of error rises (the premise is that techs make more errors than pharmacists).
- Untrained technicians make lots of errors.
- Confusion as to what clerks and technicians job really is. Is this an employer issue? (That is – job training and expectations)
- Pharmacists checking more than one technician causes more stress.
- Add stress to technicians.
- Pharmacist's license on the line.

Comments on expansion of duties:

Expand duties to what? (Following comments refer to background documents submitted for solution C-1, included in Board of Pharmacy mailing dated April 11, 2001)

- see additional item "i" down
- are "a-o" in regulations?
- "i" is the only new one (today, only a pharmacist can contact a doctors office)
- when dealing with robotic dispensing, a technician and check
- "l" speaks to automated equipment (monitored and maintained), the end product is pharmacist's responsibility

- “a-e” are non-discretionary, currently exist
- the rest are “implied”
- “I” can clerk check robotic machine output
- “a-e” is in book
- “g-o” is implied
- Pharmacist-in-charge always responsible

Other comments:

- Education of technicians is an issue
- Inpatient/outpatient – differentiate or integrate? that is, should standards be the same?
- Fresno study – 75/79 NO expansion of tech duties
- Currently, no standards for technicians.
- Using current technician laws to the full extent would alleviate shortage.
- Certified technicians – make liability on their license
- Retail must have a technician and a clerk
- Don’t increase technician duties until pharmacists consult
- Requirement to ensure patient care
- Only way to validate is to certify – use an outside source
- Good technicians decrease pharmacist’s stress
- Bad technicians increase pharmacist’s stress
- Expanding role doesn’t do any good if there are not more of them and if there is no education
- How can one pharmacist fill 250 Rx /day?

VOTE OF THE PANEL:

Expansion of the role of technicians could alleviate the manpower shortage when appropriate quality assurance processes are in place with the goal of increasing the pharmacist’s role in performing patient care services.

9 voted YES

Interdependent issues:

- Tech check tech
- Technician certification
- Ratios

Take another vote (on expansion of duties) when interdependent issues are discussed.

DISCUSSION OF INTERDEPENDENT ISSUES:

C-4:

Increase the ratio of technicians to pharmacists.

Increase ratio - Arguments For:

- Decrease time it takes to fill Rx (techs fill bottles, pharmacist checks, then consults)
- Non-pharmacist (technician) can be 3rd party interface – if there was an extra technician
- Increase ratio would help if technicians are hired in the first place. Employers are not compelled to hire.
- Technician:pharmacist ratio in hospitals is 2:1 – it works (are hospital techs trained differently?)

Increase ratio – Arguments Against:

- More technicians per pharmacist mean less hours for pharmacist (job security issue?)
- Technician would still be focused on 3rd party issues

Expand role/Increase ratio – Arguments For:

- Less stress because pharmacist has more help
- Majority of states allow 2:1, some have no limit
- From a working pharmacist in Arizona – each additional technician allowed pharmacist to:
 - consult
 - DUR
 - check Rx filled by technicians
- If technicians fill – could alleviate stress

Expand role/Increase ratio – Arguments Against:

- Overburdened technicians
- Errors because pharmacists have less time to check work
- With increased ratio, 3x more errors - “PIC” report
- Pharmacist wants to “hold on” to duties and doesn’t give work to technicians
- Typists have no liability

VOTE OF THE PANEL:

Expansion of ratio and role of technicians could mitigate shortage when appropriate quality assurance is in place ensuring the pharmacist's role in performing patient care services.

11 voted YES

Solution B-2:

Require the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) examination as a qualification for technician registration.

Technician education/certification explanations:

- Certification – skills, knowledge to do technician job – not necessarily PTCB exam
- If hours are not met, exam is OK
- Opportunity to fast track
- There should be a minimum standard
- If technicians don't take on additional roles, no need for certification
- One of the measures (metrics) for role expansion is technician qualification

Comments on technician test:

- Want test to satisfy in/out patient
- Want test to represent necessary skills
- Liability expectations – insurance
- PTCB is nationally recognized
- Requiring more of existing technicians will cause most of them to quit

Comments on hour requirement for technicians:

- 120 didactic hours not enough
- Have more hours in conjunction with test
- Minimum hours is 240
- Re-evaluate current qualifications for technician registration

Technician education/certification – Arguments For:

- Attract different individual
- Chance for career path
- Higher pay

VOTE OF THE PANEL:

All technicians must demonstrate a minimum level of competencies (test, classroom, experiential) in order to be registered. Must include a grandfather with a window of opportunity to take an exam and pass.

11 voted YES, 1 abstain