



Becoming a Certified Pharmacy Technician



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Introduction

Over the past several months, I've worked as a technician at Rite Aid Pharmacy. It served as an internship experience as I learned about pharmaceuticals under the supervision of a pharmacist and took a certification exam.

Issue Confronting Site:

The purpose of offering pharmacy technician certification is to ensure that the employees are knowledgeable and will promote proper wellness practices as well as ensure technicians are able to provide the best service to customers. After getting certified, I became more confident in my ability to perform my duties. It also provides training to expand our capabilities.



Activities:

My activities consisted of working through training modules in a program called Pharmacy Technician University (PTU) and applying and practicing what I learned while preparing prescriptions for patients. Most of the training modules included information on different types of drugs and their preparation, function, administration, and side effects. I also got an introduction into pharmaceutical calculations, medical terminology, and drug classifications and safety. Some of what I learned about was review from classes I have taken, such as chemistry, biology, anatomy, and physiology. After each module I had to take a quiz, and after completing all the modules I took the certification exam. Some of my duties could include entering computer orders in the computer for filling, record keeping, reconstituting solutions, and pill counting. Tasks were always completed under the supervision of a pharmacist.

My most frequent task was filling prescriptions by counting tablets or capsules. Tablets are a condensed powder whereas capsules are a loose medication encased in a hard shell. We counted all prescriptions by fives using the pill counting tray and the spatula. This was a time efficient method and ensured that the medications never came in contact with our hands. After a technician prepared a prescription, they put it in a blue basket (seen in the back) to be checked by the pharmacist. After the pharmacist checked it, they placed it in the red basket, indicating that it was ready to be hung up in a bag and sold. The tray in the middle was for paper prescriptions people dropped off that we had to later enter in the computer system by hand. If you look closely at the medication bottle, you can see there is a red "X" on it. This indicates that the bottle is open as we only opened one bottle at a time so ensure they didn't expire.

Impact:

Many of the skills I learned will be applicable in the career I am working towards as a veterinarian. They would help me in any health-care position I obtain. For example, this summer I will be working as a veterinary technician. I have worked as a vet tech in the past and a lot of the skills I've learned have overlapped. While I haven't had to use skills such as handling controlled substances, drug interactions, and important factors to consider when prescribing a medication; they will be helpful in my future as a doctor.

It has been especially interesting to work in a pharmacy during the COVID-19 pandemic as a lot of my work have been related to it. For example, I have had to fill many prescriptions for COVID-19 related medications, assist patients with performing COVID-19 tests, and prepare for vaccine appointments. We have had to take extra safety precautions, for example, after assisting someone with COVID-19 at the drive-thru window by disinfecting the area. I liked being able to have an impact on stopping the pandemic and helping the people who contracted the virus.

Site Information:

Rite Aid Pharmacy

4606 Admiral Peary Hwy, Ebensburg, PA 15931

Supervisor: Dr. Vanessa Zamboni

Mission and Goals: Our goals at this company are to provide care to improve that wellness of our patients. Along with promoting good health practices, we aimed to educate and inspire people to learn about their prescriptions and prioritize their health, as well as stop the spread of the Coronavirus.

Future Work:

Working in a pharmacy was a pleasurable experience, however, I don't think I will again. Right now, I am planning on applying to veterinary school after graduation. This experience was valuable to me because now I have a basic understanding of medications which will help me in my future as a vet. In vet school, I will have to learn about pharmaceuticals, and I think I will have an easier time understanding it. I now feel more confident in my ability to learn about them and find them interesting, so I can look forward to future pharmaceutical classes rather than be nervous for them.

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