

Hospital Pharmacy Practice for Technicians

Mark G. Brunton, CPhT



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Dedication

In memory of Charles Alexander Brunton III.

*“To everything there is a season, and a time
to every purpose under heaven.”*

—Ecclesiastes 3:1

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Preface

When teaching pharmacy technician students in the classroom, one of the most frequently asked questions is about the difference between health system and retail pharmacy. In the beginning, my answers would cover some of the major points of divergence. “Health system technicians don’t handle insurance billing.” “Retail technicians don’t compound IVs.” “Retail technicians deal directly with patients; health system technicians deal with nurses.” And so on and so on. I have come to realize that there are not just minor differences in a few key areas. The very nature of everything is different. Health system pharmacy is a completely different animal in terms of processes, interactions, and workflow.

This text was written for the purpose of giving a student an overview of all aspects of health system pharmacy, not just those “minor areas.” By presenting a broad picture of the different duties, technology, and policies of this field, a student will be better prepared to excel in this setting. This falls in line with the standards of accreditation for the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) nicely, because nonretail experiential training is a requirement. By teaching students the proverbial ins and outs of health system practice, their performance will improve when participating in these externships. This will hopefully also increase health system pharmacy’s willingness to train students across the board. In addition, this text has a strong professionalism component built in and customized to interactions with health system employees and situations. These chapters are at the front of the text on purpose, with the theory that these skills will prepare a student for improved performance not only in the field, but also in the classroom.

Although the roles and responsibilities of pharmacy technicians are constantly evolving, and technology is growing ever more advanced, the principles in this text will allow a student to hit the ground running and be able to more easily evolve and thrive in this dynamic profession.

About the Author

Mark G. Brunton has served in the field for 10 years as a health system pharmacy technician, and has instructed technician students for 8 years. Mr. Brunton has been a speaker at the American Society for Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Midyear Clinical Meeting for 3 years and has served as their Technician Education Committee Chair. He has also been a subject matter expert for the development of a blended curriculum for Kaplan College's pharmacy technician program. Mr. Brunton has also served as the technician representative for the Nevada Society of Health-System Pharmacists (NVSHIP), and was awarded Technician of the Year for 2011 by NVSHIP. Mr. Brunton was selected to be a panel member for the U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment on Educational Progress conference for vocational training. He is currently a member of the Technician Advisory Committee to the Nevada State Board of Pharmacy. It is his express pleasure to be able to help train a workforce of confident and competent technicians for future practice.

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All of my pharmacy students both past and present for asking those questions that dug to the root of that all-pervasive question, “Why?” It is through the delivering of material to you that I have anecdotes and real-life stories to put in this text for many more technicians to learn from.

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