



## get on the clinical services path

### Is this the job for me?

Take this quick quiz to find out if pharmacy technician is a good direction for you:

- 1 Are you interested in working with medications?  
 YES  NO
- 2 Are you detail-oriented and very exact in your work?  
 YES  NO
- 3 Are you good with people?  
 YES  NO
- 4 Do you mind repeating the same tasks over and over again?  
 YES  NO
- 5 Do you enjoy math and science?  
 YES  NO
- 6 Can you handle stressful situations?  
 YES  NO
- 7 Do you want to get into a career in one to two years?  
 YES  NO

If you answered yes to several of these questions, you may be on the right track!

### What's it all about?

Pharmacy technicians help pharmacists prepare and fill prescriptions, and provide information and other health care products to patients. Due to the nature of their job, pharmacy technicians must be very exact and careful in their work. Pharmacy technicians work under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist, and are often employed in drug stores, hospitals, clinics and drug companies.

### What do pharmacy technicians do?

The responsibilities of a pharmacy technician differ depending on where they work. For example, in a drug store, a pharmacy technician may operate a cash register, while in a hospital, they may deliver medication to patients' rooms. The following list outlines the common duties of a pharmacy technician:

- Review and verify prescriptions or requests for refills.
- Maintain proper storage and security for drugs.
- Fill bottles with prescribed medications. Prepare and attach labels to containers.
- Monitor machines that fill prescriptions.
- Count, measure or mix medications.
- Check for authenticity, accuracy and completeness of prescriptions.
- Price and file prescriptions that have been filled.
- Review patient records to determine possible drug interactions.

- Run cash register.
- Prepare insurance claim forms.
- Answer telephones and respond to customer questions.
- Clean and sterilize pharmacy equipment.
- Create and update patient profiles.
- Calculate charges for medication and equipment.
- Deliver medications and supplies to patients or staff.
- Count inventory and enter data into computer.
- Receive and store incoming supplies.
- Sell other health care products and services.

### How much money can I make?

In Alaska, pharmacy technicians earn an average hourly wage of \$16.23, and have an average annual salary of \$33,760.

### How do I become a pharmacy technician? How long does it take?

To become a pharmacy technician, you must:

- Have a high school diploma or GED.
- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Complete on-the-job training or a formal training program.

- Be fluent in reading, writing and speaking English.
- Have an active Alaska State Pharmacy Technician License.
- May become nationally certified.

Employers often prefer applicants who have completed formal training. Formal pharmacy technician programs offer either certificates or associate's degrees. Certificates usually take one year of full-time study, and associate's degrees typically take two years.

While not required, pharmacy technicians may also earn national certification by taking an exam.

Learn more about pharmacy technician programs in Alaska by reviewing the "training providers" section later in this publication.

### Attention high school students!

Think you want to become a pharmacy technician? Well, the time to start planning is now. In general, you should take four years of English, three years of math, three years of social studies, two years of science and possibly two years of a second language. Other recommended classes and electives include:

- Health education
- Introduction to health care
- Community health
- Safety and first aid
- Health care occupations
- Chemistry
- Anatomy and physiology
- Probability and statistics
- Consumer law
- Computer applications
- Keyboarding

You should also discuss your plans with a teacher, counselor or parent, and check to see what work-based learning opportunities, such as field trips, job shadowing and internships, are available in your community.

### Are there jobs available?

There are currently about 17 job openings a year for pharmacy technicians in Alaska, and this occupation is expected to continue to grow quickly (26 percent growth compared to 14.8 percent for all occupations).

### Where are the jobs?

Pharmacy technicians work wherever pharmacists are employed. About half of all pharmacy technicians work in retail drug stores, while others work in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and research laboratories.

### What else is on this pathway?

Want to learn about other possible opportunities in the clinical services career pathway? Be sure to read about medical assistants and pharmacists – other clinical services "hot jobs" in Alaska!

