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Hospital and Health-System **PHARMACY TECHNICIANS**

ASHP ASSESSMENT OF CRITICAL ROLES
SUPPORTING PATIENT CARE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOR HOSPITAL AND HEALTH-SYSTEM PHARMACY AND HUMAN RESOURCES EXECUTIVES

Hospitals and health systems rely on technical staff to support the patient care and operational functions of healthcare professionals. All disciplines require well-trained and competent technical staff to perform the essential services necessary to support the many patient care areas of hospitals and health systems. Hospital and health-system pharmacy technicians support pharmacists with essential patient care and medication-related functions such as clinical, medication supply chain, dispensing and compounding, financial management, information technology, patient assistance, and regulatory compliance. ASHP and its Pharmacy Executive Leadership Alliance Advisory (PELA®) Panel conducted an analysis of hospital and health-system pharmacy technicians that provides an evaluation of 166 job functions and associated skill mix complexities (Table 1).

KEY FINDINGS:

- Pharmacy technicians support important patient care job functions in all patient care areas of pharmacy practice (e.g. hospitals, community, specialty, home infusion, and large chain).
- Pharmacy technicians provide essential job functions that support patient safety initiatives and ensure medication management and distribution are accurate and technology and automation are efficient.
- Hospital and health-system pharmacy technician job functions are as complex as many other hospital and health-system technical positions; many functions require specialized knowledge, skills and abilities such as sterile intravenous compound preparation, automation and technology support, and healthcare data management.
- Hospital and health-system pharmacy technicians have the most “high complexity” and “specialized” job functions when compared to other patient care areas of pharmacy practice, which needs to be considered when utilizing any market data that generalizes “pharmacy technician” for wage analysis and wage grades.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF JOB FUNCTIONS PER PHARMACY TECHNICIAN PRACTICE DOMAIN

PROCESSING MEDICATION ORDERS	21
COMPOUNDING, STERILE	20
SUPPLY CHAIN AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT	18
PURCHASING AND CONTRACTING	14
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND REPORTING	14
CLINICAL PHARMACY SUPPORT	12
COMPOUNDING, NONSTERILE	12
AUTOMATION AND TECHNOLOGY	11
BILLING AND REIMBURSEMENT	7
CUSTOMER SERVICE	7
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE	7
TRANSPORT AND DISTRIBUTION OF MEDICATIONS	7
HAZARDOUS DRUGS HANDLING	6
PHARMACY OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT	6
IMMUNIZATION MANAGEMENT	4

Hospital and health-system pharmacy technician job functions are **AS COMPLEX AS MANY OTHER HOSPITAL AND HEALTH-SYSTEM TECHNICAL POSITIONS**; many job functions require specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities such as sterile intravenous compound preparation, automation and technology support, and collecting and compiling health care data.

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN JOB FUNCTION COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The job function analysis categorized functions by complexity utilizing a range of high, medium, and low (Table 2). Assessing complexity is critical as it delineates the job functions necessary for each pharmacy patient care area. This assessment also demonstrates the similarities with other hospital and health-system technical job categories.

TABLE 2: PHARMACY TECHNICIAN PRACTICE DOMAIN JOB FUNCTIONS BY COMPLEXITY

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN PRACTICE DOMAINS (N=NUMBER OF JOB FUNCTIONS IN DOMAIN)	High Complexity	Medium Complexity	Low Complexity
Automation and Technology (n=11)	6	4	1
Billing and Reimbursement (n=7)	4	2	1
Clinical Pharmacy Support (n=12)	7	5	0
Compounding, Nonsterile (n=12)	3	6	3
Compounding, Sterile (n=20)	8	10	2
Customer Service (n=7)	1	2	4
Hazardous Drugs Handling (n=6)	0	3	3
Immunization management (n=4)	2	1	1
Pharmacy Operations Management (n=6)	3	1	2
Processing Medication Orders (n=21)	2	5	14
Purchasing and Contracting (n=14)	10	4	0
Quality Assurance and Reporting (n=14)	9	3	2
Regulatory Compliance (n=7)	4	2	1
Supply Chain and Inventory Management (n=18)	3	6	9
Transport and Distribution of Medications (n=7)	1	1	5

Hospital and health-system pharmacy technicians require **SPECIALIZED** training and skills with 37% of 166 job functions rated as **HIGHLY COMPLEX**



HOSPITAL AND HEALTH-SYSTEM PHARMACY TECHNICIANS

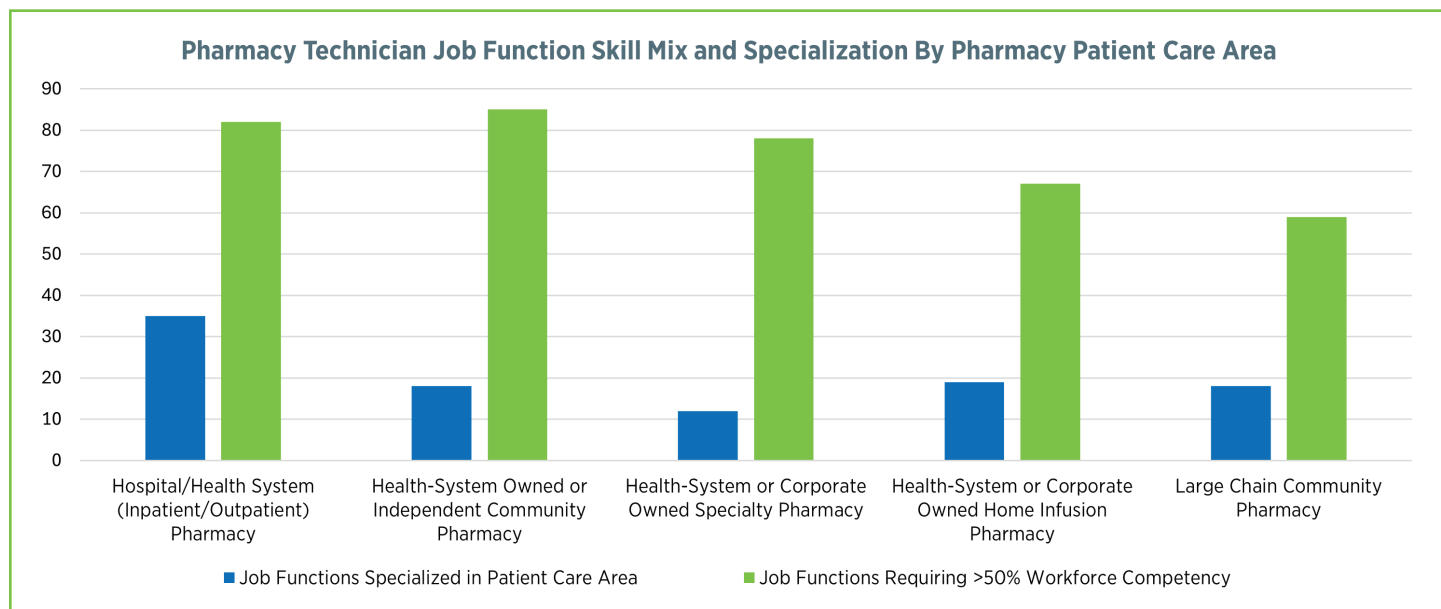
The evaluation of pharmacy technician roles was analyzed by cross-tabulating data on each of the 166 job functions and associated levels of complexity (Table 3).

TABLE 3: PHARMACY TECHNICIAN JOB FUNCTION COMPLEXITY BY PHARMACY PATIENT CARE AREAS

	Hospital/Health System (Inpatient/Outpatient) Pharmacy	Health-System Owned or Independent Community Pharmacy	Health-System or Corporate Owned Specialty Pharmacy	Health-System or Corporate Owned Home Infusion Pharmacy	Large Chain Community Pharmacy
Job Functions of High Complexity (n=63)	60	46	38	36	28
Job Functions of Medium Complexity (n=55)	51	46	31	30	32
Job Functions of Low Complexity (n=48)	41	44	35	32	37
Job Functions Not Routinely Performed in Patient Care Area	14	30	62	68	69

Ensuring the necessary skill mix of all hospital and health-system professional and technical roles is essential for patient safety and optimal operations (Table 4). This highlights the importance of recruiting, retaining and continuously training hospital and health-system pharmacy technicians, as well as the need to evaluate the wages and wage grade comparison to other patient care delivery technical roles in hospitals and health systems.

TABLE 4: PHARMACY TECHNICIAN JOB FUNCTION SPECIALIZATION AND SKILL MIX BY PHARMACY SECTORS



REFERENCES

1. Hospital and Health-System Pharmacy Technicians: ASHP Assessment of Critical Roles Supporting Patient Care (Full Report)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASHP Pharmacy Executive Leadership Alliance Advisory Panel 2022-2024. Additionally, Samuel V. Calabrese, BSPharm, MBA, FASHP, CPEL; Angela T. Cassano, PharmD, BCPS, FASHP; David Chen, BSPharm, MBA; Quyen Dinh, BS; Sue'ad Elchehimi, PharmD, MBA; Lisa Lifshin, BSPharm; Taylor Lindsay, PharmD; Renee Mott, PharmD, MPH, CPPS, DPLA; Gabrielle Pierce, PharmD, MBA; Autumn Pinard, PharmD, MBA; Kathleen Pawlicki, BSPharm, MS, FASHP; and Tyffani T. Wingfield, PhD, MA

Updated June 2025