



# ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF PHARMACY

*newsletter to promote pharmacy and drug law compliance*

## **Update on Practice of Pharmacy Workgroup Meetings**

**By Gracie Bradford, P4 Samford University McWhorter School of Pharmacy**

As it pertains to 680-X-2-.14, The Role of Technicians in Pharmacies, the past three practice of pharmacy (POP) workgroup meetings have focused on the following overarching topics/themes:

- **Role of Technicians:** As the rule is currently written, technicians may not accept new prescriptions of any nature by oral communication, prepare or read a transfer to another person, or provide a medication to a patient without a pharmacist's verification. In the workgroup's discussion, many attendees suggested expanding technician duties to allow for taking a new prescription, taking a refill, and transferring a prescription. Results from a recent Alabama Pharmacy Association survey were supportive of adding these functions to the scope of a technician's license but only for non-controlled substances. Meetings also discussed tech-check-tech (TCT), and the success of TCT may vary according to practice setting. Those opposed to TCT believe that it is the professional duty and ultimate responsibility of pharmacists to perform final verification. Those in favor of TCT support the technology that already exists within institutional settings and believe that it could be implemented in the retail setting as well. If the Alabama State Board of Pharmacy chooses to amend the rule, workgroup members have suggested adding language to explain that all permitted technician duties could be subject to approval by the supervising pharmacist and/or pharmacist on duty at their own discretion.

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- **Ratio:** Workgroup attendees generally seem to agree that anyone involved in the dispensing or handling of a prescription, as well as inventory and supply chain tasks, should be included in the ratio, while those performing administrative functions and data entry may be excluded from the ratio. Some pharmacists expressed concerns with data entry being excluded from the ratio due to the possibility of prescriptions being input incorrectly and whether or not all information is being entered accurately (eg, patient name, birthday, address, phone number, allergies; doctor name, address, phone number, National Provider Identifier; drug name, strength, dosage form, quantity, directions, refills, day supply; insurance BIN, GRP, PCN, member ID, cardholder ID, billing).
- **Supervision:** As the rule is currently written, technicians may perform the POP only under the immediate direct supervision of a pharmacist. Further, the definition of supervision per Code of Alabama §34-23-130(3) states, “The direct on-site overseeing of the performance of assigned or delegated duties or functions.” Some meeting attendees support the idea that the data entry of prescriptions sent to pharmacies electronically already has direct supervision built into the process and therefore warrants removal from the ratio.
- **Next Steps:** President Christy Garmon and Treasurer Thomas Cobb will bring the information from all three POP workgroup meetings back to the full Board to begin discussion of the rulemaking process.

### **Current Legislation**

Senate Bill (SB) 15, a bill to amend 34-23-151 Continuing Education; Technician Assistance; Duties of Pharmacist, received a unanimous favorable vote at the Alabama House Health Committee. The change requested to (b) of the aforementioned statute would remove the language, “While compounding, there shall be no more than three technicians per pharmacist.” This action would allow the Board the authority to set the ratio by rule. House Bill 52, SB 15’s companion bill passed the House Committee on March 19, 2024, and has been sent to the governor for signature.

### **Recent Rule Amendment**

Rule 680-X-2-.37, Continuing Education for Pharmacy Technicians, is currently being amended to correct a statutory reference. The rule incorrectly references the statute as Code of Alabama 34-23-132. The correct statute reference is Code of Alabama 34-23-33.

## **Collaborative Practice Update**

Alabama's test-to-treat protocol was recently approved in October 2023. Recently, changes were made to test-to-treat regulations to include a 1:3 physician-to-pharmacist ratio, as well as a 20-mile radius requirement between practice sites. For questions or more information on collaborative practice, please contact Dr Anne Marie Nolen.

## **New Database Coming Soon**

The Board has begun working on the transition to Carahsoft/ThoughtSpan as its new licensing software. The Board is very excited about this new system, as it will allow for more efficient processing of applications and renewals. This transition will be ongoing, with an anticipated conversion date of October 1, 2024, prior to the next renewal cycle.

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