

March 3, 2025

PTSBC Position Statement on NAPRA's 2024 Entry-to-Practice Competencies

The Pharmacy Technician Society of British Columbia (PTSBC) acknowledges the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) for updating the entry-to-practice (ETP) competencies for pharmacy professionals. These revisions aim to align pharmacy practice with evolving healthcare demands while ensuring patient safety. However, PTSBC has concerns regarding the revised competencies for pharmacy technicians and their potential impact on the profession, patient care, and the broader healthcare system.

Key Concerns and Implications**1. Compounding Competency Changes**

- The shift from "Pharmacy technicians are able to prepare and compound sterile and non-sterile products" (2014) to "Identify compounding situations that require sterility and describe principles, procedures, and risks for sterile compounding" (2024) significantly impacts both pharmacy technicians and pharmacists.
- Pharmacy technicians' role has shifted from direct preparation to identification and understanding, which may limit career opportunities in hospital and specialized pharmacy settings.
- Workplaces may reassign sterile compounding responsibilities to pharmacists or require additional certification for pharmacy technicians wishing to maintain this skill.
- Training programs may reduce hands-on sterile compounding instruction, leading to a skills gap and increased reliance on pharmacists or a smaller pool of specially trained pharmacy technicians.
- Employers may need to revise staffing models, potentially increasing pharmacists' workload and oversight responsibilities for sterile compounding.
- While this change aims to enhance safety, it risks narrowing technicians' core responsibilities and contributing to workforce shortages if not properly addressed.

2. Blurring of Role Distinctions

- Combining pharmacy technician and pharmacist competencies into a single document may reduce clarity around each profession's unique contributions.
- Pharmacy technicians may feel their expertise is overshadowed, leading to inconsistencies in how their role is defined and utilized across practice settings.
- Employers, educators, and regulators may interpret these changes differently, potentially leading to misaligned expectations and underutilization of pharmacy technicians' expertise.

3. Shift from Technical Skills to Knowledge-Based Competencies

- The 2024 competencies emphasize understanding principles and risks rather than explicitly requiring pharmacy technicians to perform key technical tasks such as product preparation, dispensing, and compounding.
- This shift could lead to a perception that pharmacy technicians are moving away from hands-on roles, potentially impacting job expectations, training programs, and workforce utilization.

4. Increased Expectations for Leadership & Professional Judgment

- The inclusion of leadership, decision-making, and stewardship competencies expands the professional expectations for pharmacy technicians.
- While this recognizes the evolving role of technicians, it may introduce added pressures without corresponding increases in authority, formal training, or compensation.

5. Unclear Pathways for Career Progression & Specialization

- Unlike the 2014 version, the updated competencies do not explicitly differentiate between entry-level and experienced pharmacy technicians.
- This lack of distinction could create challenges in defining career advancement opportunities and standardizing post-entry training for specialized roles.

PTSBC recognizes NAPRA's commitment to developing a national approach to competency assessment before these changes take full effect. However, we urge regulatory bodies, educators, and employers to carefully consider the potential workforce, training, and operational impacts of these revisions. Clear implementation guidelines, structured transition plans, and ongoing support for pharmacy technicians will be essential to maintaining high-quality patient care and a sustainable pharmacy workforce.

PTSBC remains committed to advocating for pharmacy technicians and will continue to engage with key decision-makers to ensure the profession's continued growth and recognition within the healthcare system.

Sincerely,



Bal Dhillon, Director of Education