

THE PHARMACY TECHNICIAN CRISIS IMPACT AND SOLUTIONS



An at-a-glance view of this critical issue – and tips on how your organization can address it

Since 2020, health systems have been plagued by persistent shortages of qualified pharmacy technicians. New data underscores the scale of the current crisis – and the struggle ahead.



Source: NCPA



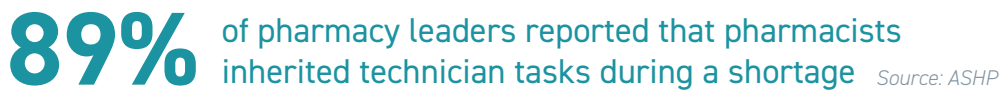
Industry impacts are significant

A shortage of technicians compromises the quality and speed of pharmacy services – often with negative patient impacts. Even the basics of distributing drugs safely and on-time are put at-risk without adequate technician support.



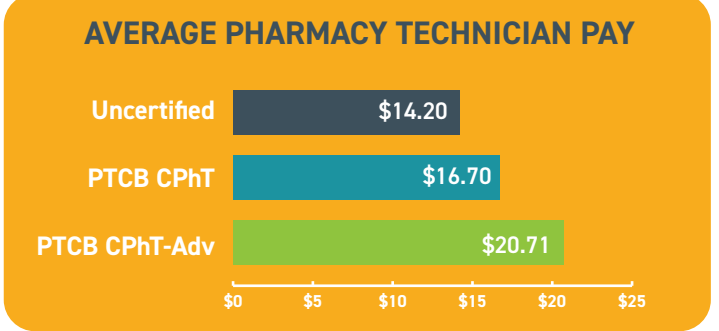
Technician shortages cause pharmacist burnout

If there are not enough technicians on staff, those tasks still need to get done – often by pharmacists who inherit them. This situation can quickly lead to unhappy, burned-out pharmacists, particularly if positions aren't filled for months.

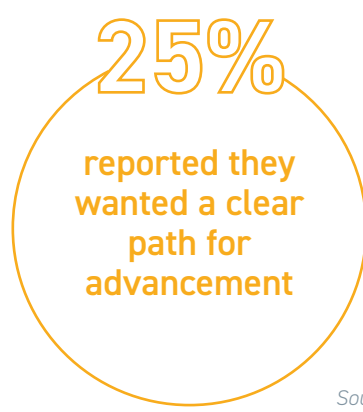
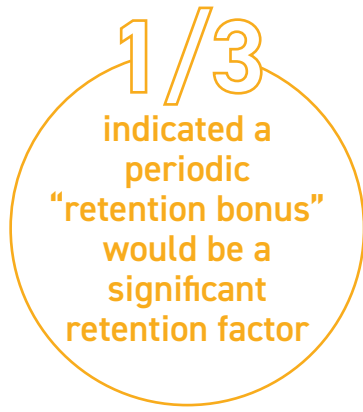
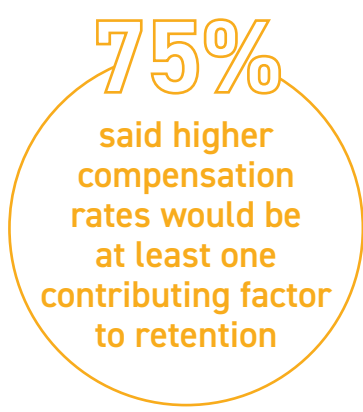


Compensation and advancement opportunities matter

Technicians deserve to be celebrated, compensated at a living wage, and provided a pathway for growth into advanced positions. A recent pharmacy technician survey found that pay and advancement were key drivers for retention.



What pharmacy technicians are saying about pay and advancement



Source: ASHP

How is the industry responding?

Visante interviewed pharmacy leaders from three different health systems to understand what they were doing to address the pharmacy technician shortage at their organization. This is what they had to say:



Tom Greenlee, PharmD, Retail Pharmacy Manager, University of Missouri Healthcare

Building a career lattice instead of a ladder

From the health system perspective, you've got different teams and different silos within your pharmacy department, your acute care side, outpatient, specialty pharmacy, the infusion units, maybe even your business team...the lattice construct provides so much more flexibility for not just upward role mobility, but lateral or diagonal movement."



Staci Hermann, PharmD, MS, Chief Pharmacy Officer, Dartmouth Health

Maintaining competitive wages

The things I think make rural healthcare most challenging are maintaining competitive wages (not only to other healthcare providers, but across all industries in the region) and the fact that most staff live 45 to 60 minutes away, so the cost of travel with minimal to no public transportation available must be factored in from a recruiting and compensation perspective."



Melissa Ortega, PharmD, MS, Vice President of Ambulatory Pharmacy Services, Tufts Medicine

Leaning on technology and training

Technology and automation solutions—that's the big challenge. Where can we continue to deploy automation and technology to support technicians to work at the top of their license? On the acute care side, we've deployed automation at every phase of the medication use process. On the ambulatory side, we've deployed robotics to help fulfillment processes."

Key advice to address the shortage

It's clear that the pharmacy technician crisis is a risk to broad healthcare operations. To address future shortages, healthcare leaders need a holistic approach that includes both short- and long-term strategies. We recommend focusing on these 5 areas for maximum impact.

Leverage technology, automation, process improvement and system integration to reduce labor demand.

Reassess compensation structures and develop career lattices (vs. ladders) to remain competitive.

Grow the pipeline through apprentice or health system-based technician training programs.

Align on requirements, including registration, licensure, and certification to demand higher entry-level wages.

Deploy engagement strategies to improve patient care, operational efficiency, job satisfaction and flexibility.

Pharmacy technician shortages can decrease productivity and employee engagement, compromising pharmacies' ability to distribute drugs safely to patients. Learn more about the shortage, and what your organization can do to address it, in our latest whitepaper.

[Download Our Whitepaper: The Pharmacy Technician Workforce Crisis](#)