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2025 Executive Pharmacy Exchange Focus Session: Technician Recruitment & Retention

THIS SESSION IS NOT OPEN TO SUPPLIERS

Applying for CE credit or need a Certificate of Participation?
Be sure to snap a pic of the code shown at the end of this session.

CE Deadline: 09/30/25



Howdy!

Moderator & Panelists



Moderator

**Kara Fortune,
PharmD**

Sr. Director,
Pharmacy Solutions
HealthTrust



Panelist

**Jeanne Anderson,
PharmD, MBA,
BCPS**

Executive Director,
Pharmacy Services
Beacon Health System



Panelist

**Jenny Burnette
PharmD, MBA,
BCPS**

Vice President,
Pharmacy Services
HCA Healthcare,
Central West Texas



Panelist

**Holly Kaczmarek,
PharmD**

Pharmacy Director
Elkhart
General Hospital



Panelist

**Shelley Nesbitt,
PharmD, CPh**

Director, Pharmacy
HCA Healthcare,
Florida Palms
West Hospital

Disclosures



The presenters have no real or perceived conflicts of interest related to this presentation

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Learning Objectives



At the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Recognize key strategies to promote retention rates for pharmacy technicians.
- Recall elements to successful technician advancement, education and career ladder development.
- Identify innovative ideas for effective recruitment and retention of pharmacy technicians.



PANELIST INTRODUCTIONS



Beacon Health System



Serving northern Indiana and southwest lower Michigan with care sites across seven counties

Getting to know Beacon Health System

★ BEACON HEALTH SYSTEM

We are a unified health system made up of a vast number of services, offerings, locations and ways to provide our community top notch care throughout the region. **Introducing Beacon by the numbers.**



Over 8,100 associates



Over 1,175 medical staff providers



787 staffed beds systemwide



146 care sites across 7 counties



30 medical residents



3 medically-based Health & Fitness locations

Elkhart • Granger • Three Rivers



7 Hospitals Beacon Children's • Bremen • Elkhart • Epworth • Granger • Memorial • Three Rivers

*as of 6/1/2025

Source: Beacon Health System data. Not for reuse without permission of Beacon Health System.

Beacon Health System



Pharmacists

- 125 positions
- 86.9 FTEs

Technicians

- 105 positions
- 78.7 FTEs
- 12% Tech Turnover Rate*

FTE – Full-Time Equivalent; Tech - Technician

*annualized 2024

HCA Healthcare

HCA Healthcare is one of the nation's leading providers of healthcare services, comprising **approximately 190 hospitals**** and **2,400 ambulatory sites of care** in **20 states** and the United Kingdom.



By the numbers

~316K

colleagues*

99K+

registered nurses*

44K+

active and affiliated physicians*

Ranked 61

in Fortune 500**

*As of Dec. 31, 2024

**As of March 31, 2025

Other sites of care:

Affiliated with HCA Florida Healthcare

**HCA Healthcare
Physician Services**

Our affiliated businesses:

Powered by HCA Healthcare

Source: HCA Healthcare. Not for reuse without permission of HCA Healthcare.

HCA East Florida Division



Pharmacists

- 273 positions
- 199 FTEs

Technicians

- 261 positions
- 175 FTEs
- 8% Tech Turnover Rate*

FTE – Full-Time Equivalent; Tech - Technician

*annualized 2024



Poll Question #1

Which of the following strategies do you believe is **MOST** effective in improving pharmacy technician retention?

- A. Competitive compensation & benefits
- B. Opportunities for career advancement & certification
- C. Recognition & positive workplace culture
- D. Flexible scheduling & work-life balance
- E. Increased technician involvement in advanced roles



PHARMACY TECHNICIAN RECRUITMENT & RETENTION



Kara Fortune, PharmD

Recruitment & Retention



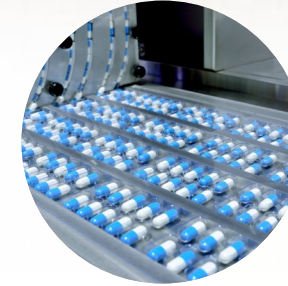
Turnover Rates

- Technicians 26.9%
- Pharmacists 11%



Advanced Technician Roles

- Regulatory Compliance
- 340B Drug Pricing Program
- USP <797> Compliance
- Medication Reconciliation



Burnout

- 34.0% of hospitals measure burnout
- 83.7% of hospitals work to prevent & mitigate burnout

Sources: Getty Images. Used with permission of HealthTrust.

“ASHP National Survey of Pharmacy Practice in Hospital Settings: Workforce – 2022.” Am J Health Syst Pharm, 2023. <https://academic.oup.com/ajhp/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/ajhp/zxad055/7109423?redirectedFrom=fulltext&login=true> Accessed 6/2/2025.



Poll Question #2

Is your health system measuring burnout (i.e., survey, ProQOL, etc.)?

A. Yes

B. No

C. In planning phase

ProQOL – Professional Quality of Life

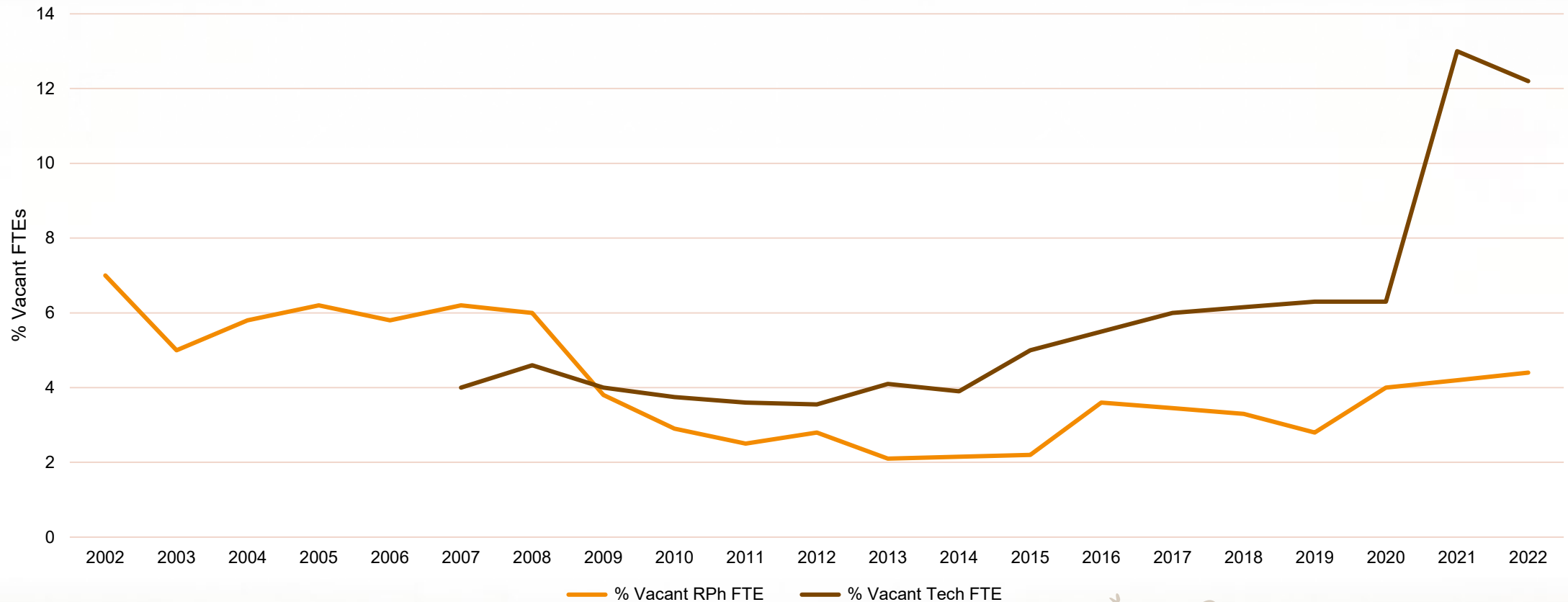
13 | CE Credit Deadline: 09/30/25



Recruitment & Retention, *continued*



RPh & Tech Inpatient FTE Vacancy Trends



Source: "ASHP National Survey of Pharmacy Practice in Hospital Settings: Workforce – 2022." Am J Health Syst Pharm, 2023.
<https://academic.oup.com/ajhp/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/ajhp/zxad055/7109423?redirectedFrom=fulltext&login=true> Accessed 6/2/2025.

Recruitment & Retention Overview



Source: "ASHP Practice Advancement Initiative 2030." American Society of Health-System Pharmacists <https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/pharmacy-practice/pai/docs/PAI-Recommendations.pdf>. Accessed 6/9/25.



Poll Question #3

What is the **MAIN** barrier to implementing a pharmacy technician training program?

- A. Leadership support
- B. Financial support for training
- C. Time commitment
- D. Workload & staffing shortages
- E. Other

ASHP Practice Advance Initiative (PAI) 2030



Pharmacy Technician Role, Education & Training

Practice-focused

- Advanced Roles
- Responsibility for technical & supporting activities

Organization-focused

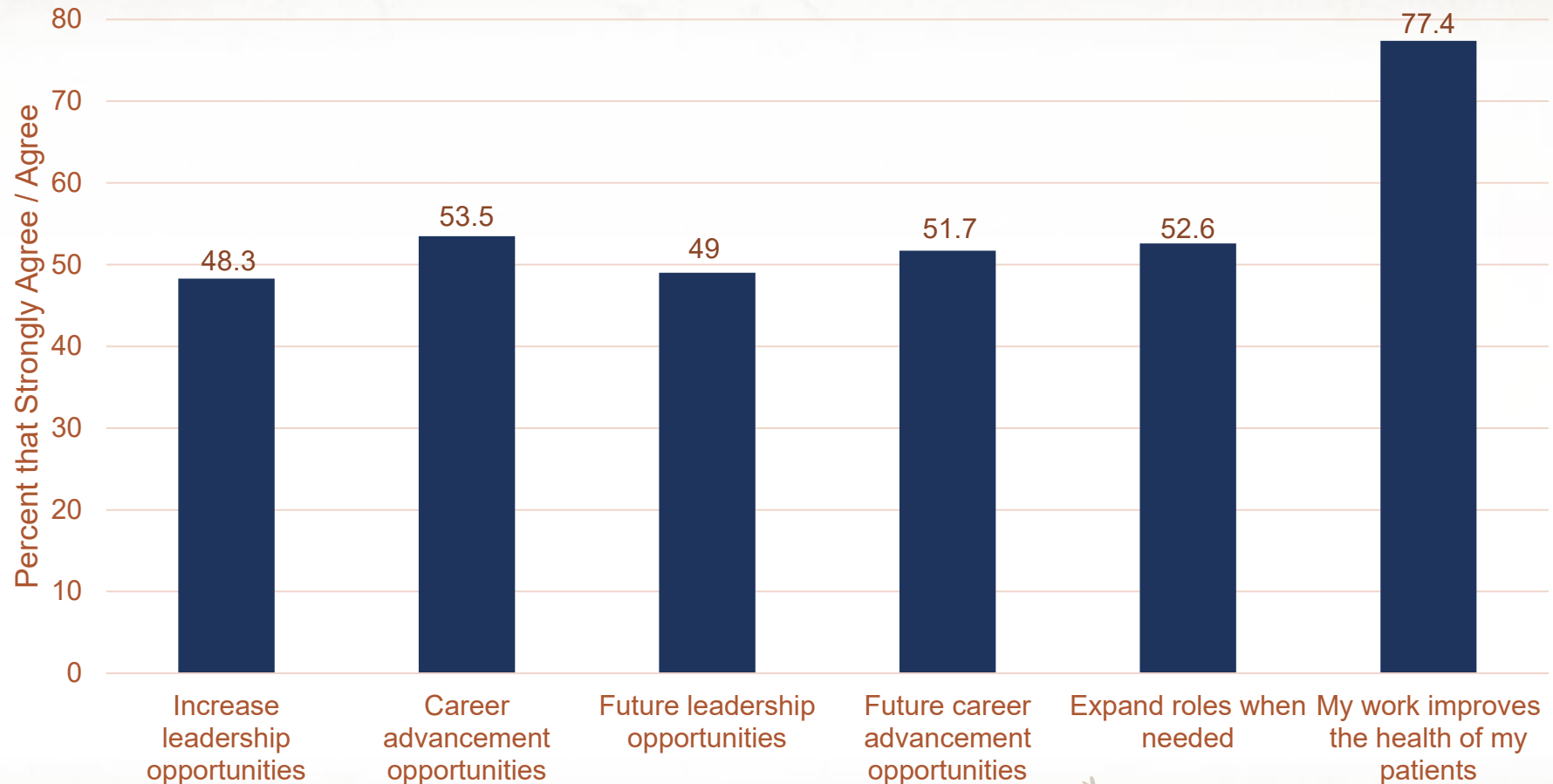
- Complete ASHP/ACPE accredited program
- CPhT credential
- Career paths

Profession-focused

- Defined scope of practice for acute care & ambulatory-care settings

Source: "ASHP Practice Advancement Initiative 2030." American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
<https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/pharmacy-practice/pai/docs/PAI-Recommendations.pdf>. Accessed 6/9/25.

Career Advancement Insights From CPhTs

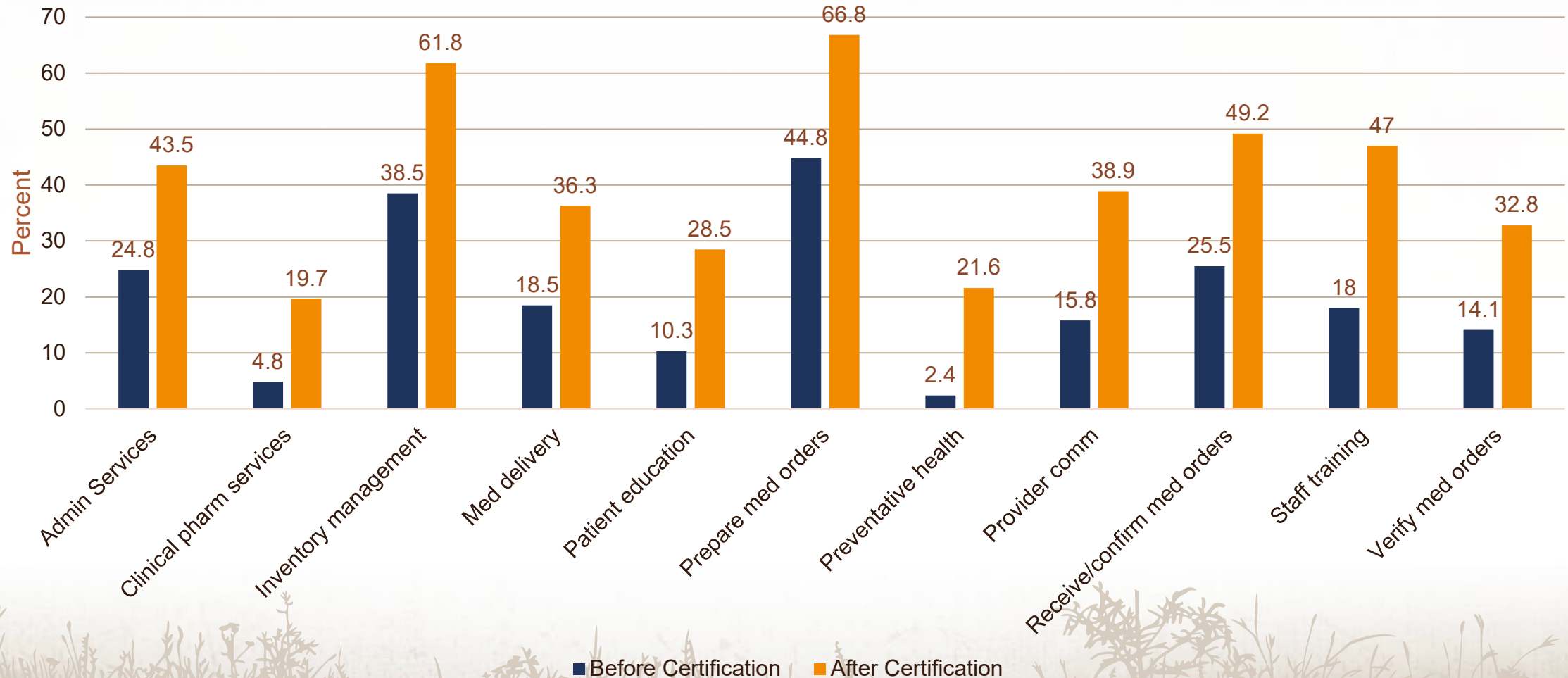


Benefits of being a CPhT. A total of 23,007 survey responders reported benefits of having earned a pharmacy technician certification during their career.

Career Advancement Insights From CPhTs, *continued*



Pharmacy technician involvement in traditional pharmacy roles before & after certification





Assessment Question #1

Creating a sense of purpose for pharmacy technicians is a strategy that promotes retention rates by which of the following ways?


- A. Creates alignment with company mission by regularly connecting back to daily duties
- B. Increases engagement & retention
- C. Fosters dedication to excellent performance
- D. Guides unified decision-making
- E. All of the above



Answer: Assessment Question #1

Creating a sense of purpose for pharmacy technicians is a strategy that promotes retention rates by which of the following ways?

- A. Creates alignment with company mission by regularly connecting back to daily duties
- B. Increases engagement & retention
- C. Fosters dedication to excellent performance
- D. Guides unified decision-making
- E. **All of the above**



BEACON PHARMACY TECHNICIAN TRAINING & CLINICAL LADDER PROGRAMS



Jeanne Anderson, PharmD, MBA, BCPS

Holly Kaczmarek, PharmD

— BEACON HEALTH SYSTEM —

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM



Jeanne Anderson, PharmD, MBA, BCPS



Beacon Pharmacy Technician Training Program



Why This Program Matters



Addresses a regional shortage of licensed pharmacy technicians



Reduces reliance on travel staff



Creates a sustainable technician pipeline

Beacon Pharmacy Technician Training Program

Anticipated Outcomes



Prepares associates for state/national certification



Cultivates a skilled technician workforce trained in Beacon standards



Enhances retention through internal development



Reduces dependency on external hires



Supports advancement opportunities

Beacon Pharmacy Technician Training Program



Overview

Program Structure

- **Didactic Curriculum:** Pharmacy Technician University (PTU) through TRC Healthcare
- **Experiential Training:** Conducted onsite at Memorial Hospital with preceptor oversight & skill validation
- **Program Materials:**
 - PTU Course (126 contact hours)
 - Beacon Pharmacy Technician Training Manual
 - Skill Validation Checklists
 - Technician Competency Exam
- **Educational Agreement:** 18-month commitment



Source: Getty Images. Used with permission of HealthTrust

PTU: Didactic Content



Core Topics

- Pharmacy Law & Compliance
- Medical Terminology & Calculations
- Medication Preparation & Safety
- Billing & Inventory Management
- Sterile & Non-sterile Compounding
 - Total: 126 hours

Program Format

- Online, self-paced modules with interactive tools
- Pass Standards
 - 80% minimum on module quizzes
 - 75% minimum on final exam



Experiential Training

Orientation & Onboarding

- Hospital & department orientation
- Review of job descriptions & policies

Learning Modules & Skills Development

- Organized by technician role (e.g., IV Room, medication requests, purchasing)
- Step-by-step guidance for skills training
- Includes expected timelines for progression

Skill Validation & Assessment

- Formal skill checklists & performance criteria for each role
- Observational sign-off by preceptors or pharmacists
- Documentation of proficiency & readiness



Beacon Health Program Outcomes

Reduced Department Turnover

- 2022 – 22%
- 2023 – 16.6%
- 2024 – 13%

Decreased Technician Overtime

- 2022 – 3,054 hours
- 2023 – 4,011 hours
- 2024 – 2,039 hours

Number of Participants

June 2022–June 2025

- 15
- 11 still employed
- 10 retained > 1 yr.

— BEACON HEALTH SYSTEM —

CLINICAL LADDER PROGRAM



Holly Kaczmarek, PharmD





Beacon Health System

Clinical Ladder Program



Designed to recognize & reward professional development across disciplines



Encourages associate retention, recruitment & engagement



Supports optimal patient outcomes

Beacon Clinical Ladder Program



Introduction to the Program

Eligibility Requirements

- Non-leadership, non-salaried, non-union positions (e.g., nurses, pharmacists, technicians, therapists)
- Must be ≥ 0.4 FTE status
- ≥ 1 year at Beacon (at time portfolio is due)
- Manager approval required
- Meets/Exceeds expectations on last performance review
- No “written counseling” disciplinary action in past 12 months



FTE = Full-time Equivalent

Source: Getty Images. Used with permission of HealthTrust

Clinical Ladder Levels



Level	Financial Compensation	Points Required
CLII	\$1,000	18 points (min of 4 points in at least 2 categories)
CLIII	\$2,000	32 points (min of 4 points in at least 3 categories)
CLIV	\$4,000	48 points (min of 4 points in all 4 categories)

Point Categories



Exemplary
Professional
Practice

Transformational
Leadership

Structural
Empowerment

New Knowledge,
Innovation &
Improvements



Exemplary Professional Practice

- Years of Experience
- Performance Appraisal
- Education Degree
- Academic Courses
- National Certification
- Journal Club/Certification Study Group
- Professional Continuing Education Hours
- Professional Organizations

Point Categories

Point Categories

Transformational Leadership



- Preceptor or Student Oversight
- Team Leader/Charge Nurse
- Hospital Committee/Council Membership
- Pharmacy Residency
- Guest Lecturer at a College/University
- Community Health & Wellness Activity
- Kaizen Participation
- Super User, Clinical Champion, Project Lead
- Awards (Unit based, Hospital based, State/National based)
- E-crew Involvement
- Leadership Development Classes

Point Categories

Structural Empowerment



- Develop & Present Education
- Design a Bulletin Board or Poster
- Develop Patient/Family Education Materials
- Oral Presentation at Region/State/National Conference
- Poster Presentation at Conference
- Clinical Skills Instructor
- Assist with Skills Validation
- Auditing
- Community Service
- Participate at Beacon Recruitment Event
- Cross Trained to Another Unit/Department



New Knowledge, Innovation & Improvements

Point Categories

- Question with Literature Review
- Question with Presentation to Committee
- Question with Presentation to Leadership
- Present a Case Study
- Evidence-based Practice Project
- Quality Improvement/Performance Improvement Project
- Presentation at Quality Summit or Safety Fair
- Conduct a Formal Research Project through IRB
- Article Accepted for Publication in Peer-reviewed Journal
- Create/Update Policy, Procedure, Protocol &/or PowerPlan

Clinical Ladder Program (CLP) Selection Process



Professional Portfolio Oversight Committee

- Members
 - Vice President of Nursing
 - Vice President of Operations
 - Professional Development Coordinators
- Responsibilities
 - General oversight of the CLP
 - Review of the Beacon CLP
 - Review & revision of eligibility criteria & evaluation of program
 - Respond to written appeals concerning decisions made by the Professional Portfolio Review Committee
 - Educate members of the Professional Portfolio Review Committee to their role

Professional Portfolio Review Committee

- Members
 - Professional Development Coordinators
 - Practitioners & Specialists
- Responsibilities
 - Review & recommend action of portfolio applications submitted annually
 - Communicate via email & individual consultation as applicable

Program Benefits



- Recognition
- Career Advancement
- Professional Pin & Title
- Financial Compensation

Source: Getty Images. Used with permission of HealthTrust..



Assessment Question #2

Successful career ladder development includes which of the following elements?


- A. Assigning routine tasks without variation
- B. Reducing performance feedback to annual reviews only
- C. Limiting technician involvement in department initiatives
- D. Offering consistent opportunities for professional development



Answer: Assessment Question #2

Successful career ladder development includes which of the following elements?

- A. Assigning routine tasks without variation
- B. Reducing performance feedback to annual reviews only
- C. Limiting technician involvement in department initiatives
- D. Offering consistent opportunities for professional development



HCA Healthcare StaRx Pharmacy: Reskilling Hospital Workforce



Shelley Nesbitt, PharmD, CPh

Jenny Burnette, PharmD, MBA, BCPS



Healthcare Workforce Pipeline

Growing employees to perform new roles is more efficient & cost effective than recruiting external talent

- Reskilling existing hospital talent
 - Community workforce development
 - Entry level pathway to growth
 - Exposure & access
 - Risk appropriate
 - Educational time & intensity
 - Financial investment
 - Clinical – Nursing, Technician roles (Radiology, Laboratory, OR/Cath Lab, Pharmacy)
 - Non-clinical – Supply chain, security, administration, communication, marketing, accounting/finance

Source: "How health systems and educators can work to close the talent gap." *McKinsey&Company* 2023.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare/our-insights/how-health-systems-and-educators-can-work-to-close-the-talent-gap#/>. Accessed 6/23/25

Developing an Internal Pharmacy Technician Program

StaRx Technician Trainee Program



- 12-Week Training Program
 - 6 weeks of interactive classroom discussions, skills practice & clinical documentation training with an experienced Pharmacy Educator
 - 6 weeks of Pharmacy Technician Preceptorship at the hiring HCA Hospital
- PassAssured Core Curriculum, a PTCB-recognized training program
- ASHP – American Society of Health-System Pharmacists

Sources:

1. “Career & Technical Education Pharmacy Tech.” Aztec Software, LLC. <https://www.aztecsoftware.com/health-cte/pharmtech-student-course/>. Accessed 6/23/2025.
2. “Starting a Pharmacy Technician Training Program.” American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. <https://www.ashp.org/professional-development/technician-program-accreditation/starting-a-pharmacy-technician-training-program?loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly>. Accessed 6/23/25.

Strategic Relationships & Support



Growing a
concept into
a reality

- Education & Coordination
 - Corporate &/or local resources
 - Pharmacy-specific resources
- Executives
 - Funding
 - Hidden fees undermining access (e.g., \$50 finger printing)
- Human Resources
 - Job descriptions
 - State board requirements (e.g., Texas pharmacy technician trainee)
- Compensation
 - Current > Training program > Graduate/Licensed Pharmacy Technician
 - Equity among current department technicians



Increasing Access

Scaling the
StaRx
Pharmacy
Technician
Trainee
Program
Across HCA
Healthcare



Raising the Bar



ASHP
Application

ASHP
Initial Survey

ASHP
Closing the Gap

PTCB
Enrollment

PTCB
Study Support

PTCB
Commit to Exam

Pathways to Career Opportunity Grant (PCOG) to Assist with Program Resources

Partnerships to Support Growth



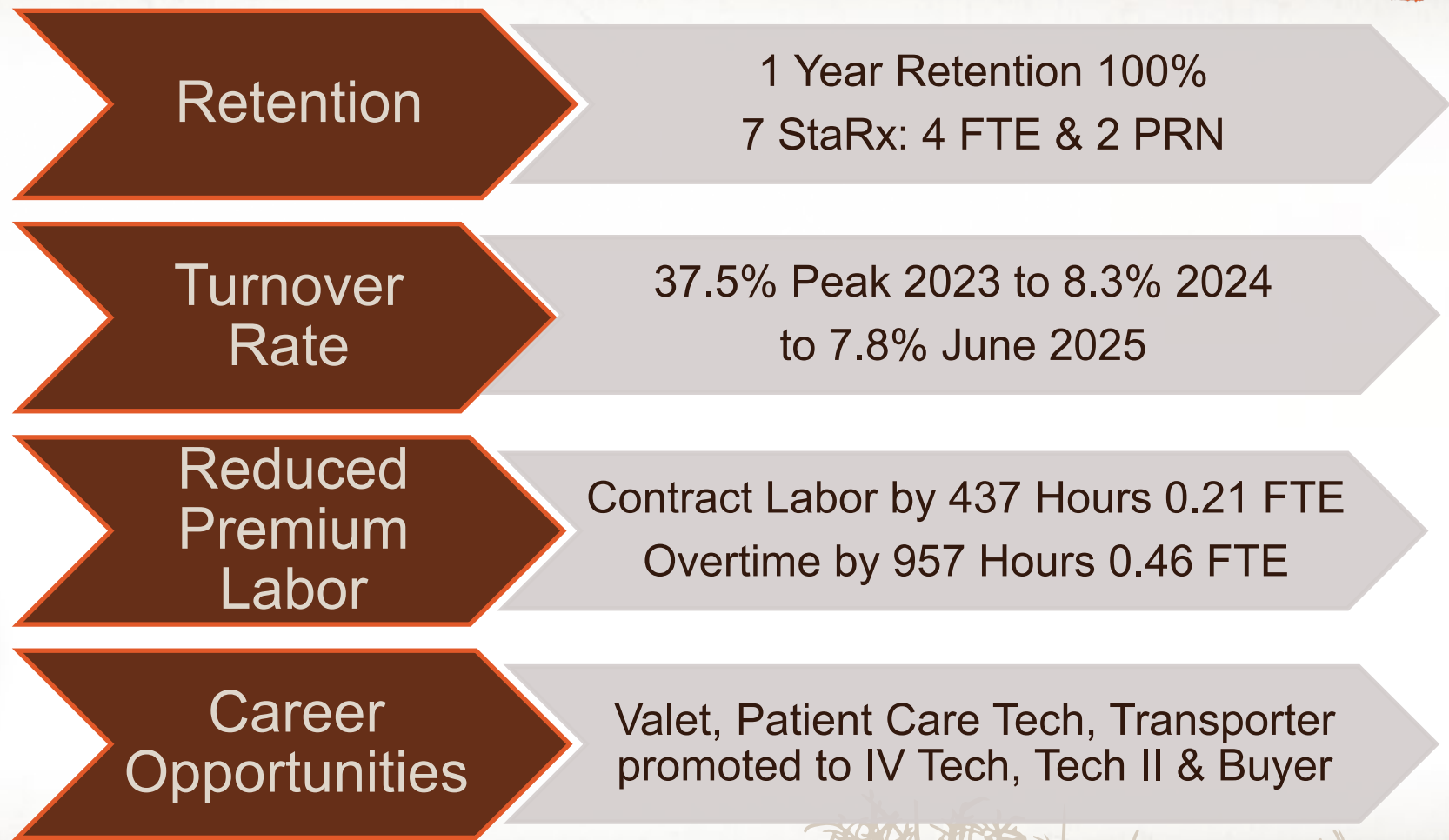
PCOG focus is to formalize on-the-job training & existing educational programs into structured **Registered Apprenticeships**. This offers a win-win situation:

- **For Employers:**
 - Financial incentive, with the \$800 per registered **apprenticeship reimbursement**, directly supporting the facility.
 - Develop a highly skilled & loyal workforce, addressing potential talent shortages.
- **For Employees (participants):**
 - They receive formal recognition for their skills & training through a **Department of Labor Certificate** upon completion.
 - They gain access to crucial **case management** & approved support services, helping them overcome potential barriers to success.
 - They benefit from continued mentoring & **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**, ensuring practical skill development & career progression.



Impact on HR Metrics

Critical Staffing Relief for HCA Florida Palms West Hospital



HR = Human Resources; FTE = Full Time Equivalent

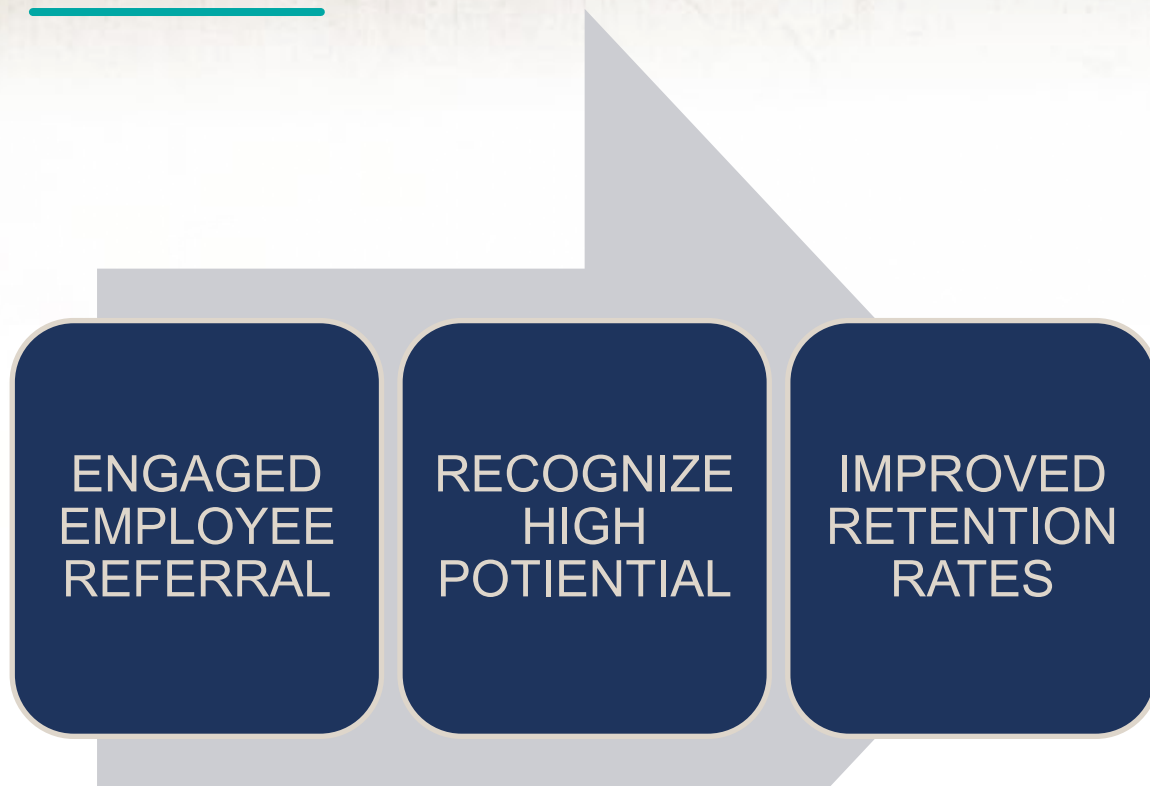


Elevating Competencies

New Hires
Receive
Dedicated
Hospital-
based
Training,
Licensed &
Board
Certified



Long-term Engagement



- Engaged Employees Likely to Recommend
- Career Advancement for High Performers
- Behavior-based Applicant Pool
- Investment in Trust
- Work Friendships:
 - Reduce Stress
 - Improve Productivity
 - Raise Job Satisfaction
- Improved Retention by 46%

Sources:

1. "15 Surprising Employee Referral Statistics That Matter," *Apollo Technical Engineered Talent Solutions*: <https://www.apollotechnical.com/employee-referral-statistics/#6>. Accessed 6/18/2025.
2. "The Increasing Importance of a Best Friend at Work," *Gallup*: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/397058/increasing-importance-best-friend-work.aspx>. Accessed 6/18/2025.

Dedicated to Rosemarie Martin

Passionate Educator, Cheerleader & Friend





Assessment Question #3

Innovative ideas for effective recruitment & retention of pharmacy technicians include which of the following?

- A. Improve Patient Safety & Quality
- B. Reduce Staff Turnover
- C. Reduce Premium Labor
- D. All the Above



Answer: Assessment Question #3

Innovative ideas for effective recruitment & retention of pharmacy technicians include which of the following?

- A. Improve Patient Safety & Quality
- B. Reduce Staff Turnover
- C. Reduce Premium Labor
- D. **All of the Above**

References



- ASHP National Survey of Pharmacy Practice in Hospital Settings: Workforce – 2022. Am J Health Syst Pharm, 2023. <https://academic.oup.com/ajhp/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/ajhp/zxad055/7109423?redirectedFrom=fulltext&login=true>.
- ASHP Practice Advancement Initiative 2030. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. <https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/pharmacy-practice/pai/docs/PAI-Recommendations.pdf>.
- Career advancement insights from certified pharmacy technicians: Enhanced opportunities for the pharmacy technician workforce. J Am Pharm Assoc. DOI: 10.1016/j.japh.2024.102214.
- How health systems and educators can work to close the talent gap. McKinsey&Company 2023. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare/our-insights/how-health-systems-and-educators-can-work-to-close-the-talent-gap#/>.
- Career & Technical Education Pharmacy Tech. Aztec Software, LLC. <https://www.aztecsoftware.com/health-cte/pharmtech-student-course/>.
- Starting a Pharmacy Technician Training Program. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. <https://www.ashp.org/professional-development/technician-program-accreditation/starting-a-pharmacy-technician-training-program?loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly>.
- Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant (PCOG) Program. <https://www.fldoe.org/pathwaysgrant/>.
- 15 Surprising Employee Referral Statistics That Matter. Apollo Technical Engineered Talent Solutions: <https://www.apollotechnical.com/employee-referral-statistics/#6>.
- The Increasing Importance of a Best Friend at Work, Gallup: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/397058/increasing-importance-best-friend-work.aspx>.



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Thanks y'all!

