

CHANGE IN BOARD POLICY CONCERNING PHARMACY TECHNICIANS ASSISTING AT FREE OR CHARITABLE CLINICS

For several years, the Board of Pharmacy has provided the following guidance statement concerning technicians who assist at free or charitable clinics:

“Volunteer pharmacy technicians providing services at a facility which has a pharmacy permit designated as a free clinic shall complete the training program described in G.S. 90-85.15A(b) but need not register with the Board.”

A recent case has prompted the Board to rescind this guidance statement. Board staff investigated a case in which a pharmacy technician who had surrendered her registration due to diversion of controlled substances began volunteering at a free clinic. In short order, the technician began diverting controlled substances from the free clinic. Because the technician was not required to register as a technician under the Board guidance statement, Board staff had no knowledge that she was again serving in a technician capacity, and staff at the free clinic were unaware of the technician’s background and diversion history.

As this case demonstrates, registration of pharmacy technicians serves an important public health and safety protection purpose. Accordingly, the Board’s prior guidance statement is rescinded. All pharmacy technicians practicing in any pharmacy setting must be registered with the Board of Pharmacy.

Some questions likely to arise:

1. When must a previously unregistered technician practicing at a free or charitable clinic become registered?

The Board expects any pharmacy technician practicing at a free and charitable clinic who is not currently registered to become registered by the close of the 2015 renewal period. The renewal period closes on February 28, 2015.

2. Who is responsible for ensuring that a previously unregistered technician practicing at a free or charitable clinic becomes registered?

The pharmacist-manager at the free or charitable clinic.

3. I am a registered pharmacy technician employed at a pharmacy. I also volunteer at a free or charitable clinic. Do I need to be separately registered to continue volunteering?

No. The technician must advise the Board of Pharmacy of all places of practice, but multiple registrations for multiple practice sites are not required.

4. Where can I find information about the registration process?

Forms, applications, and instructions for technician registration are found here:
http://www.ncbop.org/technicians_forms.htm

5. How much does it cost to register as a technician?

There is an initial \$30 application fee, and an annual \$30 renewal fee.

6. Am I required to obtain continuing education to maintain a pharmacy technician registration?

No. North Carolina law does not obligate pharmacy technicians to satisfy any continuing education requirement.

Technicians who are certified by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (“PTCB”) must satisfy annual continuing education requirements to maintain certification.

Information on PTCB’s certification requirements is found here:

<http://ptcb.org/renew/continuing-education#.VEa6gck9tA4>

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