

STAFFING

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for Pharmacy Technician, General Schedule (GS) 0661, appointed under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3), Appointments in Veterans Health Administration and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B), Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. The pages in this handbook replace the existing Pharmacy Technician Qualification Standard, VA Handbook 5005, Appendix G28, in its entirety. Authority is given to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under 38 U.S.C. § 7402, Qualifications of appointees, to prescribe qualifications for occupations identified in, or established under, 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3), Appointments in Veterans Health Administration and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B) Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments. The new standard is effective on the date of publication. This qualification standard will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005 that is maintained on the [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer Website](#) and [VA Publications Website](#). Significant changes include:
 - a. Revise education and experience requirements.
 - b. Change the full performance level to the GS-06.
 - c. Revise existing assignments and establishes new assignments.
 - d. Revise knowledge, skills and abilities for assignments.
 - e. Clarify assignment titles above the full performance level.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Human Resources and Administration/ Operations, Security and Preparedness (HRA/OSP) (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) (05), Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059).
4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.
5. **RESCISSION:** Not applicable.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
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**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF
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DISTRIBUTION: Electronic Only

APPENDIX G28. PHARMACY TECHNICIAN QUALIFICATION STANDARD

GS-0661

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

1. **COVERAGE.** The following are requirements for appointment or placement as a Pharmacy Technician in Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The requirements will apply to all VHA pharmacy technicians employed in the General Schedule (GS) 0661 series performing a variety of pharmacy duties under the supervision of a pharmacist. Under the supervision of a pharmacist, pharmacy technicians perform routine pharmacy functions including filling, preparation and dispensing of prescriptions, sterile compounding preparation, management of automated dispensing equipment (ADE), inventory management and multiple types of customer contact services. Advanced pharmacy technicians serve in specialized roles within the pharmacy department and are often involved with program management of their specialty area. These roles include, but are not limited to, pharmacy technicians who specialize in controlled substance management, sterile compounding, inventory/budgeting/purchasing, automation, informatics, quality management, research, clinical and call center. Lead and supervisory pharmacy technicians are also advanced roles in this series. Pharmacy technicians work in a variety of settings in VHA.
2. **AUTHORITIES.**
 - a. [P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010;](#)
 - b. [38 U.S.C. § 7401, Appointments in Veterans Health Administration;](#)
 - c. [38 U.S.C. § 7402, Qualifications of appointees;](#)
 - d. [38 U.S.C. § 7403, Period of appointments; promotions;](#)
 - e. [38 U.S.C. § 7405, Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments; and](#)
 - f. [38 U.S.C. § 7407, Administrative provisions for section 7405 and 7406 appointments.](#)
3. **DEFINITIONS.**
 - a. **Appointing Official.** The Human Resources (HR) Officer is delegated appointing authority to process and authenticate notifications of personnel actions and authority to effect management-approved employment actions on behalf of officials, employees and facilities for which service is provided.

- b. **Approving Official.** The Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director, Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM) Chief Consultant, Consolidated Mail Outpatient Program (CMOP) Director or Facility Director are the approving officials and will determine whether to approve or disapprove the appointment of employees in the hybrid occupations.
- c. **Creditable Experience.** To be creditable, a candidate must possess the required knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) associated with the scope of pharmacy technician practice. The candidate's experience must be evidenced by active professional practice. (Active professional practice means paid/non-paid employment as a professional pharmacy technician.)
- d. **General Experience.** (1) Any type of work that demonstrates the applicant's ability to perform the work of the position, or (2) experience that provided a familiarity with the subject matter or processes of the broad subject area of the occupation. Successful completion of a course for medical technicians, hospital corpsmen, medical service specialists or hospital training obtained in a training program given by the Armed Forces or the U.S. Maritime Service under close medical and professional supervision is creditable on a month-for-month basis for general experience.
- e. **Journey Level.** The full performance level for this qualification standard is the GS-06 grade level.
- f. **Ordering Officer.** Ordering Officers are nominated by the VISN Chief Logistics Officers to National Contract Service. National Contract Service designates the Ordering Officers, who can then order against a number of VA's National Prime Vendors, Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts and Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs). The commodities include pharmaceuticals, subsistence and nutrition.
- g. **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience is creditable according to its relationship to the full-time work week. For example, one week of full-time credit is equivalent to two weeks of half-time work.
- h. **Quality of Experience.** Qualifying experience must be at a level comparable to pharmacy technician experience at the next lower grade level. For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time.
- i. **Specialized Area.** Areas within pharmacy that require advanced knowledge, skills and abilities to ensure a high level of accountability for patient safety, quality of care and/or VHA or other regulatory requirements. Examples include, but are not limited to compounding sterile products, controlled substance

dispensing, research, automation, clinical informatics, quality assurance, hazardous medication compounding/management, immunizations and clinical pharmacy assignments.

- j. **Specialized Experience.** Experience that equipped the applicant with the particular knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) to successfully perform the duties of the position and is typically in, or related to, the work of the position to be filled. To be creditable, specialized experience must have been equivalent to at least the next lower grade level. Applicants who have one year of appropriate specialized experience are not required to have general experience, education above the high school level or any additional specialized experience to meet the minimum qualification requirements. Successful completion of pertinent specialized training courses in pharmaceutical and pharmacy practices while serving in the Armed Forces is creditable on a month-for-month basis up to the one year of specialized experience.
- k. **Student Pharmacy Technician.** A student pharmacy technician must be enrolled in an education and training program nationally accredited by the American Society of Health System Pharmacists® (ASHP) and Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE). The appointment of student technicians can help meet patient care needs and enhance recruitment of promising students for career service with VA. With proper orientation to the assignment and under appropriate professional supervision, students can perform duties consistent with courses they have successfully completed.

4. BASIC REQUIREMENTS.

- a. **Citizenship.** Be a citizen of the United States. Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 7407(a).
- b. **Education or Experience.**
 - (1) None required.
 - (2) For all grade levels and positions that accept both education and experience to qualify, equivalent combinations of qualifying education and experience that total at least 100% are qualifying. The combined percentage is determined by adding total qualifying experience as a percentage of the experience required for the grade level to the education as a percentage of the education required for the grade level.
- c. **Certification.** For positions above the full performance level, the employee must pass a national certification exam and hold an active national certification through either:

- (1) Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB), Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT).

OR

- (2) National Healthcareer Association (NHA), Certified Pharmacy Technician (ExCPT).

d. **Grandfathering Provision.** Pharmacy technicians employed in VHA on the effective date of this qualification standard are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the title, series and grade held, including positive education and licensure/certification/registration that are part of the basic requirements of the occupation. For employees who do not meet all the basic requirements in this standard but who met the qualifications applicable to the position at the time they were appointed to it, the following provisions apply:

- (1) Employees may be reassigned, promoted up to and including the full performance (journey) level or changed to lower grade within the occupation but may not be promoted beyond the journeyman level or placed in supervisory or managerial positions.
- (2) Employees in an occupation that requires a licensure/certification/registration only at higher grade levels must meet the licensure/certification/registration requirement before they can be promoted to those higher grade levels.
- (3) Employees who are appointed on a temporary basis prior to the effective date of the qualification standard may not have their temporary appointment extended or be reappointed on a temporary or permanent basis until they fully meet the basic requirements of the standard.
- (4) Employees who are converted to title 38 hybrid status under this provision and subsequently leave the occupation lose protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of re-entry to the occupation.
- (5) Employees initially grandfathered into this occupation who subsequently obtain additional education and/or licensure/certification/registration that meet all the basic requirements of this qualification standard must maintain the required credentials as a condition of employment in the occupation.

e. **Foreign Education.** To be creditable, education completed outside the U.S. must be deemed at least equivalent to that gained in a conventional U.S. program by a private organization specializing in the interpretation of foreign educational credentials.

- f. **Physical Requirements.** See VA Directive and Handbook 5019, Employee Occupational Health Service.
 - g. **English Language Proficiency.** Pharmacy Technician candidates must be proficient in spoken and written English to be appointed as authorized by 38 U.S.C. § 7403(f).
5. **OFFICIAL POSITION TITLES.** All official documents relating to a position (e.g., functional statements and personnel actions) must use the approved official title and grade level as described below:
- a. Pharmacy Technician, GS-03.
 - b. Pharmacy Technician, GS-04.
 - c. Pharmacy Technician, GS-05.
 - d. Pharmacy Technician, GS-06.
 - e. Pharmacy Technician, GS-07.
 - f. Pharmacy Technician, GS-08.
 - g. Pharmacy Technician (Procurement/Inventory), GS-08.
 - h. Lead Pharmacy Technician, GS-08.
 - i. Pharmacy Technician, GS-09.
 - j. Pharmacy Technician (Procurement/Inventory), GS-09.
 - k. Supervisory Pharmacy Technician, GS-09.
 - l. Pharmacy Technician, GS-10.
 - m. Pharmacy Technician (Procurement/Inventory), GS-10.
 - n. Supervisory Technician, GS-10.
 - o. Pharmacy Technician, GS-11.
 - p. Pharmacy Technician (Procurement/Inventory), GS-11.

6. GRADE DETERMINATIONS. In addition to the basic requirements for appointment in [paragraph 5](#), VA HR staff must use the following criteria to determine the appropriate grade assignment of candidates.

a. Pharmacy Technician, GS-03.

(1) Education and Experience.

(a) One year of post-secondary education.

OR

(b) Six months of general experience.

OR

(c) Student Technician. A student enrolled in an approved nationally accredited pharmacy technician program for an occupation identified in 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1)(A) or (B) may be appointed on a temporary full-time, part-time or intermittent basis under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1)(D) for a period not to exceed two years or the duration of the individual's program.

(2) **Assignment.** Employees at the entry-level are developmental trainees. The pharmacy technician trainee is performing routine pharmacy duties under direct supervision of higher graded technicians to learn the basic functions of pharmacy operations.

b. Pharmacy Technician, GS-04.

(1) Education and Experience.

(a) Completion of two years of post-secondary coursework related to pharmacy (e.g., 12 semester hours of science and mathematics courses).

OR

(b) Completion of one of the following:

i Six months of experience, that demonstrated knowledge of medication or medical field practice.

OR

ii Successful completion of a military or nationally recognized pharmacy technician education/training program. American Society

of Health System Pharmacists® (ASHP), American Pharmacist Association (APHA), Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), PTCB or NHA are examples of acceptable professional organizations recognizing such training programs. **NOTE:** Training courses recognized by PTCB and NHA are not actual certifications.

OR

iii One year of experience equivalent to next lower grade level.

(2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the education or experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

- (a) Ability to follow policies and procedures.
- (b) Ability to maintain appropriate files.
- (c) Ability to communicate with patients and other health professionals.
- (d) Ability to follow both written and verbal instructions.
- (e) Ability to operate office software/equipment to include, computers, software applications and printers.

(3) **Assignments.** Employees at this grade level serve in a pharmacy technician developmental position. Pharmacy technicians at this level perform duties such as dispensing prescriptions at the pharmacy window and prepacking medications.

c. **Pharmacy Technician, GS-05.**

(1) **Education or Experience.**

- (a) Successful completion of four years post-secondary education with courses related to pharmacy (e.g., 48 semester hours of science, mathematics, pharmacy) or a bachelor's degree.

OR

- (b) An associate's degree in pharmacy technician or technology (48 semester hours of concentrated pharmacy technician training).

OR

- (c) One year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.

- (2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the education or experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Knowledge of basic pharmacy operations.
 - (b) Knowledge of pharmaceuticals to perform duties in pharmacy functional areas.
 - (c) Knowledge of pharmaceutical nomenclature (including generic, chemical and proprietary names of drug).
 - (d) Ability to fill prescriptions.
 - (e) Ability to use pharmacy information systems or basic pharmacy dispensing equipment with oversight.
- (3) **Assignments.** Pharmacy technicians at this developmental level perform all duties expected of employees at lower grade levels; however, they are expected to exercise greater judgement, require less supervision and operate in accordance with all established policies and procedures. Pharmacy technicians at this grade level will fill orders and dispense/ deliver medications using automated systems. These technicians require oversight of assigned duties by full performance level technicians and or pharmacists.

d. **Pharmacy Technician, GS-06.**

- (1) **Education or Experience.** One year of experience equivalent to the next lower level.
- (2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:
 - (a) Knowledge of Federal and state laws related to pharmacy practice.
 - (b) Knowledge of preparation, storage and distribution of medication products including those requiring special handling and documentation.
 - (c) Ability to use pharmacy information systems or operate pharmacy dispensing equipment.
 - (d) Knowledge of basic inventory procedures.
 - (e) Ability to communicate with patients and staff and direct questions to appropriate personnel.

- (3) **Assignments.** Pharmacy technicians at the full performance level may fill orders, dispense/deliver medications using automated systems or provide technical customer service to Veterans related to prescription needs. Duties will include delivery of medications to floors/patients, filling medications for the pharmacist to review, checking for expired medications, answering phones with appropriate disposition, preparing sterile products (when applicable) and assisting with basic inventory management such as putting up stock and identifying when medications need to be ordered.

e. **Pharmacy Technician, GS-07.**

- (1) **Experience.** Candidates must possess one year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level.
- (2) **Certification.** For positions above the full performance level, the employee must pass a national certification exam and hold an active national certification through either:
 - (a) PTCB as a CPhT.
 - OR
 - (b) NHA as a ExCPT.
- (3) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:
 - (a) Knowledge of pharmacy technician principles, practices, concepts and theories providing for sound independent work.
 - (b) Knowledge of the computerized prescription process and input of prescriptions and medication orders or electronic equivalent.
 - (c) Ability to resolve pharmacy/medication issues with other members of the healthcare team, Veterans and external customers.
 - (d) Ability to train developmental pharmacy technicians and students.
 - (e) Ability to dispense medication or sterile products following all regulations, policies and procedures to ensure safe medication distribution.
 - (f) Ability to troubleshoot automated dispensing equipment (ADE) or technology platforms/databases.

- (4) **Assignments.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Pharmacy technicians at this level are nationally certified and can work autonomously using independent judgement to perform a full range of duties. These pharmacy technicians mentor and train lower graded pharmacy technicians in the practice setting. They assist advanced/specialized pharmacy technicians and participate in performance improvement initiatives. At this level, pharmacy technicians use independent judgement to perform the full range of duties in the pharmacy. They also function as staff pharmacy technicians in various locations of the pharmacy, including pharmacy contact centers and other non-traditional pharmacy locations, with minimal oversight.

f. **Pharmacy Technician, GS-08.**

- (1) **Experience.** Candidates must possess one year of experience equivalent to the next lower grade level and demonstrate the KSAs below.
- (2) **Certification.** For positions above the full performance level, the employee must pass a national certification exam and hold an active national certification through either:
 - (a) PTCB as a CPhT.
 - OR
 - (b) NHA as a ExCPT.
- (3) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs for all GS-08 assignments and meet any additional KSAs for the assignment, if indicated:
 - (a) Comprehensive knowledge of concepts, principles, methodology and policies in a specialized area or section of pharmacy (such as sterile compounding, controlled substances, automation, clinical pharmacy, contact center, etc.) Note: See Specialized Area in the Definitions Section.
 - (b) Skill in training and orienting new and existing pharmacy facility employees and students on proper policies and procedures.
 - (c) Ability to evaluate, analyze and coordinate workflow and work activities within a specialized area or section of the pharmacy.

- (4) **Assignments.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Pharmacy technicians at this level have a higher level of responsibility for specialized areas of pharmacy and are expected to independently carry out assigned tasks of considerable difficulty. Pharmacy technicians at this grade level may be appointed to one of the following assignments:
- (a) **Pharmacy Technician.** Pharmacy technicians in this assignment specialize in areas such as sterile compounding, oncology, controlled substances, medication history review, clinical specialist (anticoagulation, pain, infectious diseases), clinical informatics, automation, immunizations and any other specialized area in the advancement of the profession. The pharmacy technician will serve as a subject matter expert and key resource in the day-to-day technician duties of the specialized area. The technician will be performing assignments such as compounding sterile products, filling controlled substance prescriptions while maintaining compliance with Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) regulations, taking medication histories and counseling patients, managing automation, managing workflow and training and orienting staff in the specialized area.
- (b) **Lead Pharmacy Technician Assignments.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Lead pharmacy technicians perform duties independently, which consist of significant scope and complexity and will assist with technician oversight. Lead pharmacy technicians lead three GS-07 or more pharmacy technicians/employees/staff members, provide direction for daily operations and assume responsibility for integrating and monitoring standard pharmacy policies to maintain continuous workflow and quality within the service. Lead pharmacy technicians must do a combination of at least three of the following duties: prepare work schedules and assign tasks to ensure timely completion of duties; ensure pharmacy resources are in optimal working condition and address workflow needs; provide guidance and support of the work unit in supervisory absence; train personnel (including students) in methods, procedures and use of equipment and instruments specific to the assigned area; provide input to supervisor on performance and training needs of employees; adjust work assignments due to absences, emergencies or changes in priorities; resolve simple informal complaints of employees and patients, refer more difficult problems to the supervisor; or recommend approval and/or disapproval of leave requests.

- (c) **Pharmacy Technician (Procurement/Inventory).** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Pharmacy technicians at this level serve as an ordering officer delegated by the national acquisition center contracting officer for the purpose of ordering against the national pharmacy prime vendor (PPV) contract and national blanket purchase agreements (BPA) for pharmacy. They are responsible for ordering medications and supplies from required sources and meeting contract compliance while maintaining multiple complex accounts with the PPV. They utilize the Government purchase card program for direct orders up to the micro purchase threshold per VA financial policy. Pharmacy technicians at this level are responsible for regulatory and formulary requirements to meet patient needs within budgetary limits.

i **Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).**

- (A) Basic knowledge of pharmacy procurement, distribution and storage requirements to maintain a safe working environment. This includes not limited to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), United States Pharmacopeia (USP) and DEA requirements and regulations.
- (B) Ability to assist in determining and modifying as necessary: ordering intervals, inventory levels and cost-effective ordering quantities from required sources based on current financial conditions in pharmacy, seasonal variations in drug usage, changing patterns in medical practice, delivery time requirements and urgency of medical need.

g. **Pharmacy Technician, GS-09.**

- (1) **Experience.** One year of progressively complex experience equivalent to the lower grade level.
- (2) **Certification.** For positions above the full performance level, the employee must pass a national certification exam and hold an active national certification through either:
- (a) PTCB as a CPhT.
- OR
- (b) NHA as a ExCPT.

- (3) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and meet any additional KSAs for the assignment, if indicated:
- (a) Expert knowledge serving as a key resource advising others in their particular specialty area or section of the pharmacy (such as procurement, sterile compounding (USP compounding standards), controlled substances DEA, automation, clinical pharmacy, lead tech, contact center, etc.).
 - (b) Skill in analyzing data for self-driven (independent) performance improvement projects, workload analysis and statistical reports.
 - (c) Skill in solving problems and implementing corrective actions to maximize outcomes in their program area.
 - (d) Ability to maintain special accreditations and prepare for national reviews/inspections (e.g., The Joint Commission, Inspector General, American Society of Health System Pharmacists®, controlled substance inspections).
 - (e) Ability to develop training programs and material for orientation, competency development and educational needs for regulatory requirements within the specialized pharmacy program area.
- (4) **Assignments.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Pharmacy technicians at this grade level may be appointed to one of the following assignments.
- (a) **Pharmacy Technician.** Pharmacy technician coordinators perform the full range of program coordination in their specialized area of pharmacy. These positions require independent technical judgement and expertise in complex areas of pharmacy practice that have specific laws, significant regulatory requirements and quality/safety standards. They organize, coordinate and manage single or multiple programs under the delegation of pharmacy supervisors or Associate Chiefs. Pharmacy technicians at this level must have expert understanding of regulatory and quality standards for the complex program area and manage all aspects of compliance with these standards with limited input from pharmacy supervisor(s). Pharmacy technicians at this grade level may be assigned as a coordinator in areas requiring detailed regulatory oversight and record keeping including, but not limited, to the Controlled Substance Program,

Research/Investigational Drug Program, Procurement, Automation & Informatics program, Quality/Patient Safety, Clinical or Call Center.

- (b) **Supervisory Pharmacy Technician.** Supervisory pharmacy technicians are responsible for management and supervision of at least three GS-08 pharmacy technicians. These positions require significant independent technical judgement and expertise in complex areas of pharmacy practice, regulatory requirements and quality standards. They organize, coordinate and manage programs for the pharmacy service at the facility level. These pharmacy technicians will be responsible for communicating with VISN or national pharmacy leadership as well as individual facility leadership and staff.

i **Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).**

(A) Skill in interpersonal relationships in dealing with employees, team leaders and managers.

(B) Ability to utilize staffing methodology principles to determine adequate staffing to coordinate and manage workflow and work activities within pharmacy.

(c) **Pharmacy Technician (Procurement/Inventory).**

- i Pharmacy technicians (procurement/inventory) at this level require independent technical judgement and expertise. They serve as the lead ordering officer for pharmacy service, providing guidance to lower-level procurement ordering officers. These individuals have extensive knowledge of VA policy concerning drug procurement, security and compliance with ordering officer requirements and regulatory areas (including, but not limited to, Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA) per FDA regulations, recalls, return goods, open market, drug accountability, etc.). Pharmacy technicians maintain all records of pharmacy inventory for drug accountability, DSCSA per VHA policy and all other Federal regulations. Pharmacy technicians (procurement/inventory) perform a wide range of duties providing oversight on all pharmacy inventory to ensure standard operating procedures are followed and appropriate ordering and stock levels are maintained so patient care is not impaired. They stay within budgetary requirements, comply with contracts while maintaining inventory to meet or exceed the national average performance. They are accountable for pharmacy inventory management in areas such as regulatory and VHA formulary requirements, quality standards and official VA policies/procedures within the inventory management specialized area, conforming to pharmacy legal and professional requirements.

ii Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).

- (A)** Knowledge of pharmaceutical and supply inventory requirements to ensure compliance with regulations and national/audit/inspections (e.g., financial regulations, The Joint Commission, Inspector General, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists®, DEA, USP 797/800, FDA 503A/B).
- (B)** Knowledge of clinical specifications, characteristics and ordering processes of a wide variety of soft prosthetics and supply items (e.g., catheters, colostomy, ileostomy and urostomy supply and associated products) that technicians procure to dispense to Veterans in the outpatient pharmacy setting.
- (C)** Skill in managing specialized programs related to inventory including, but not limited to, specialty medications and supplies, All Hazards Emergency Cache Program, recalls, reverse distribution and pharmaceutical waste.

h. Pharmacy Technician, GS-10.

- (1) Experience.** In addition to meeting the basic requirements, one year of progressively complex experience equivalent to the lower grade level.
- (2) Certification.** For positions above the full performance level, the employee must pass a national certification exam and hold an active national certification through either:

 - (a) PTCB as a CPhT.
 - OR
 - (b) NHA as a ExCPT.
- (3) Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and meet any additional KSAs for the assignment, if indicated:

 - (a) Ability to analyze data for performance improvement projects, workload analysis and statistical reports.
 - (b) Ability to prepare for and maintain special accreditations, inspections and reviews (e.g., The Joint Commission, Office of Inspector General, American Society of Health System Pharmacists, controlled substances inspections).

- (c) Ability to solve problems and implement corrective actions to maximize outcomes in their program area.
- (4) **Assignments.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time.
 - (a) **Pharmacy Technician.** Pharmacy technicians at this level oversee and coordinate pharmacy programs at the VISN, regional (consortium or Clinical Resource HUB level) or national level. These positions require expertise in complex areas of pharmacy practice, regulatory requirements and quality standards. The incumbent provides program oversight of specialty pharmacy programs at various VHA levels, interacting as a subject matter expert and communicates with pharmacy leadership. They gather reports, perform inspections of regulatory records and provide feedback and performance improvement. Pharmacy technicians develop comprehensive training programs and materials for orientation, competency development and educational needs related to this program. They also aggregate and analyze data related to pharmacy programs.

i Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).

- (A) Knowledge of a particular specialty area with detailed understanding of variations based on complexity of program area.
 - (B) Skill in developing comprehensive training programs and material for orientation, competency development, educational needs and regulatory requirements.
 - (C) Skill in analyzing information from multiple services, programs or facilities to evaluate regulatory compliance and make necessary quality improvements to ensure compliance within a particular area of pharmacy practice.
- (b) **Supervisory Pharmacy Technician.** Supervisory pharmacy technicians serve as supervisors in programs that service multiple VA Healthcare Systems or VISNs, requiring insight to processes and procedures that are unique to each facility or VISN. Supervisory pharmacy technicians perform the full range of administrative management and supervisory duties including assigning work; completing performance evaluations; recommending appointment, awards, advancement and disciplinary actions; and identifying continuing education and training needs. Supervisory pharmacy technicians supervise other pharmacy technicians and/or other

appropriate personnel in a VISN, region, Clinical Resource HUB or at a national level. Supervisory pharmacy technicians maintain effective relations with VA Healthcare Systems they serve as well as other VISN/regional/national program offices to accomplish program goals. Supervisory pharmacy technicians develop policies and procedures, manage document control and develop performance standards, position descriptions and functional statements.

i **Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).**

(A) Skill in managing multiple, diverse programs.

(B) Ability to contribute planning, execution and evaluation of program goals, objectives and priorities to resolve service issues.

(C) Ability to perform the full range of supervisory duties, which includes responsibility for assignment of work, performance evaluations, selection of staff, recommendation of awards, advancements and disciplinary actions.

- (c) **Supervisory Pharmacy Technician.** Supervisory pharmacy technicians at this level supervise a group of at least three GS-09 pharmacy technicians at a medical center. They use a broad knowledge of pharmacy operations to supervise complex specialty areas or sections. Employees in this position perform the full range of administrative management and supervisory duties including assigning work; completing performance evaluations; recommending appointment, awards, advancement and disciplinary actions; and identifying continuing education and training needs.

i **Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).**

(A) Knowledge of human resources administration, including such functions as the ability to monitor and evaluate performance, interview and select applicants and initiate counseling and/or disciplinary processes.

(B) Skill in troubleshooting problems and formulating solutions within complex specialty areas of pharmacy service.

- (d) **Pharmacy Technician (Procurement/Inventory).**

Procurement/inventory technicians perform duties independently under broad delegated authority which consists of significant scope, skill and complexity at the facility level. They provide oversight of the pharmacy service fund control point activity, budget expenditures and

all procurement activity to ensure full accountability and reconciliation per VHA financial policy. They collect, analyze and prepare data to complete monthly budget reports on current and past spending patterns. Pharmacy technicians provide financial status reports for review to ensure compliance to pharmacy budgetary goals and objectives. They participate in forecasting the budget for the next fiscal year, function as contracting officer representatives and ensure all VA policies, regulations and payments are interpreted, applied and completed accurately and timely. Pharmacy technicians develop standard operating procedures, training programs and material for orientation, educational needs and regulatory requirements within the pharmacy and the facility. They investigate a variety of unusual supply problems, including specialty medication purchases, backorders and questions from pharmacy or physician stakeholders.

- i **Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all the following:
 - (A) Expert knowledge of budgetary and pharmacy procurement operating procedures such as, but not limited to, budget reconciliation, annual wall to wall inventory, sterile compounding and service contracts.
 - (B) Skill in managing supply problems such as back orders, interchangeability of products during shortages or finding suitable replacement products.
 - (C) Skill in monitoring the quality of input and output of automated/perpetual medication inventory management systems.
 - (D) Ability to write policies and procedures for pharmaceutical procurement, inventory management and contracting processes.
 - (E) Ability to develop contracting acquisition packages with all necessary required documents including, but not limited to, market research, independent Government cost estimate, statement of work/performance work statement, quotes, proof of funding, etc.

i. **Pharmacy Technician, GS-11.**

- (1) **Experience.** In addition to meeting the basic requirements, one year of progressively complex experience equivalent to the last lower grade level.
- (2) **Certification.** For positions above the full performance level, the employee must pass a national certification exam and hold an active national certification through either:
 - (a) PTCB as a CPhT.
 - OR
 - (b) NHA as a ExCPT.
- (3) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs and meet any additional KSAs for the assignment, if indicated:
 - (a) Knowledge of the fiscal matters of the pharmacy program
 - (b) Skill in developing, implementing and facilitating continuous performance improvement programs and lean solutions specific to the pharmacy program.
 - (c) Ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing regarding complex programs and technical issues.
- (4) **Assignments.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity and range of variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Assignments would be at the VISN, CMOP, regional Clinical Resource HUB, consortium (multi-regional) and national level. Pharmacy technicians serve as subject matter experts for program area personnel in their specialized program area. Pharmacy technicians provide program statistical data, report metrics and oversight of a pharmacy specialized program to pharmacy leadership. They operate independently in accomplishing assigned functions within established timelines and accepted organizational practice. These individuals may manage or supervise program area personnel.
 - (a) **Pharmacy Technician.** The advanced pharmacy technician at this grade level performs duties with significant scope and responsibility to provide system support for programs with a high degree of visibility and impact on VHA Healthcare delivery. These programs affect multiple VA Healthcare Systems within VISNs, Clinical Resource HUBs, Consortiums or may affect all facilities (i.e., national

programs). Examples include VISN, regional or national initiatives in the care or treatment of patients (electronic health record, sterile compounding, automation) or program implementation/evaluation/oversight. Pharmacy technicians advise top level agency managers on new developments and advances related to the program area. They create reports, proposals and budgetary analysis for senior management to assist in effective long-range forecasting of pharmacy operations. Pharmacy technicians recommend improvements in program operations and promote efficiency and cost-effective use of resources while achieving the highest level of quality within the served program. They apply analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to issues or studies concerning administrative support functions and serve as the primary liaison between the field, the VISN and other organizations as needed.

i Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).

(A) Knowledge of clinical decision support.

(B) Skill in analyzing program level statistical reports with senior level management on a weekly, monthly and annual basis.

(C) Skill in implementing national level guidance and policies related to pharmacy processes and procedures in the program area.

(D) Ability to apply program management, evaluate program outcomes and implement effective solutions.

- (b) **Pharmacy Technician (Procurement/Inventory).** Advanced pharmacy technicians at this grade level perform duties with significant scope and responsibility monitoring the procurement process at the CMOP, VISN and national level. They identify major cost savings initiatives and/or gaps in efficiency or compliance through application of computer knowledge of prime vendor systems and or other VA and non-VA data sources. They serve as subject matter experts for purchase data for Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM). Pharmacy technicians provide oversight of the purchasing and management of hundreds of millions of dollars in pharmaceuticals and CMOP expenditures. They educate facilities on cost-effective pharmaceutical purchasing and identify opportunities for improvement. Pharmacy technicians manage VISN, CMOP or national contracts for their program area. They serve as key members of the emergency management team, identifying needs and providing support in the event of emergencies, pandemics and natural disasters to the program. They serve as liaisons between their

program area and the following entities: the national contracting office, national PBM, pharmacy prime vendors and/or other pharmaceutical companies. Pharmacy technicians provide executive leadership with metric data by extracting and formulating specific drug costs and usage data into monthly and quarterly reports. Pharmacy technicians provide guidance in all areas of pharmacy procurement in compliance with VHA directives and policy.

i. Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).

- (A) Skill in managing multiple contracts and procurement programs at the regional level (i.e., VISN program level (i.e., Consolidated Mail Outpatient Program (CMOP)) or national level.
- (B) Ability to analyze expenditure, purchasing and compliance reports for oversight for senior level management at the VISN, CMOP or national level.
- (C) Ability to serve as a subject matter expert to VA Healthcare Systems on the procurement of pharmaceuticals, e.g., the purchasing of specialty medications, handling of medication shortages and cost avoidance.

7. DEVIATIONS.

- a. An approving official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable deviations to the grade determination requirements for an employee whose composite record of accomplishments, performance and qualifications, as well as current assignment, warrants such action based on demonstrated competence to meet the requirements of the proposed grade and/or assignment.
- b. The Under Secretary for Health may approve placement of individuals in grade levels or assignments not described in this standard prior to placement in the position. The Secretary retains the authority to delegate this approval below the Under Secretary for Health.
- c. Under no circumstances will the educational or credential requirement be waived for those occupations with a positive education requirement or when specific credentials are identified as necessary to meet minimum requirements unless an exception is annotated in the qualification standard.