



## **Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission**

# **Guidance Document**

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**Title:** Ancillary Utilization Plans and Pharmacy Technician Administration

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**Reference:** RCW 18.64A.010(6), RCW 18.64A.030, RCW 18.64A.060, RCW 18.64.011

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**Approved:** Chairperson, Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission

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### **Summary**

Pharmacy technicians may provide administration of medications or devices under the immediate supervision of a pharmacist and if the Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) has authorized the pharmacy technician to administer medications or devices by approving an ancillary utilization plan (AUP).

Pharmacists wishing to use pharmacy technicians to administer medications or devices should submit an AUP that meets the standards identified in this guidance document. A failure to meet the standards identified in this guidance document may result in rejection or modification of the proposed AUP (*see* RCW 18.64A.060).

This guidance document does not allow a pharmacy technician to engage in an assessment or discussion of the clinical appropriateness of a drug or device for a patient prior to administration.

### **Background**

In December 2019, the Commission examined whether current law allows a pharmacy technician to administer medications or devices under the immediate supervision of a pharmacist. Based on its examination, the Commission determined that pharmacy technicians may provide administration of medications or devices under the immediate supervision of a pharmacist and if the Commission has authorized the pharmacy technician to administer medications or devices by

approving an AUP.

Pharmacy technicians may perform nondiscretionary functions associated with the practice of pharmacy under the immediate supervision and control of a licensed pharmacist and subject to restrictions adopted in rule by the Commission (RCW 18.64A.010(6) and RCW 18.64A.030(1)). In addition, pharmacy technicians may only be utilized by pharmacists to the extent the pharmacist has an AUP approved by the Commission (RCW 18.64A.040).

Whether an act falls within the scope of practice of a pharmacy technician is dependent on two criteria: (i) the act is nondiscretionary, and (ii) the act is associated with the practice of pharmacy. The Commission determined that administration of medications or devices is a nondiscretionary function and is associated with the practice of pharmacy (*see* RCW 18.64.011(1), (10), and (28)).

A pharmacy technician must be under the immediate supervision and control of a pharmacist when performing a nondiscretionary function associated with the practice of pharmacy (RCW 18.64A.030(1)). A pharmacy technician may not be supervised by anyone other than a pharmacist licensed by the Commission (*see* RCW 18.64.010(3) and RCW 18.64A.030(1)). Consequently, a pharmacist must supervise a pharmacy technician when the pharmacy technician is administering medications or devices.

A pharmacy technician may not engage in any nondelegable task associated with the practice of pharmacy. The Commission has a number of tasks that a pharmacist shall not delegate to ancillary personnel, including pharmacy technicians (WAC 246-945-320). The administration of medications or devices is not included as a nondelegable task.

Pharmacists may only use pharmacy technicians in a manner that is consistent with an AUP approved by the Commission. The Commission may approve, reject, or modify a proposed AUP (RCW 18.64A.060). Further, if the Commission receives a complaint that pharmacy technicians are being used in a manner that is inconsistent with an approved AUP, the Commission may withdraw any proposed AUP (RCW 18.64A.060).

### **Guidance to Pharmacists Submitting AUPs to Allow Pharmacy Technicians to Administer Medications or Devices**

Pharmacies who would like to use pharmacy technicians, for delegation by a pharmacist, to administer medications or devices must submit an AUP to the Commission for approval. The Commission will consider proposed AUPs for approval that meet the following criteria as it applies to pharmacy technicians who are administering medications:

1. The pharmacist or pharmacy intern must retain the discretionary function to determine the patient's needs and all clinical assessments, including patient counseling regarding potential risks and side effects. The pharmacy technician can assist in preparation and administration of the medication or device.

2. The pharmacy technician must have completed adequate and appropriate training on what medication and devices they may administer.
3. Training for pharmacy technicians who will administer drugs and devices must include or address the following:
  - a. Describe proper technique when preparing and administering medications;
  - b. Recognize commonly used medications and their corresponding routes of administration;
  - c. Distinguish proper needle length selection based on medications and patient age and size;
  - d. Identify proper documentation procedures;
  - e. Recall medications storage requirements;
  - f. Describe safety measures to avoid accidental needle stick injuries;
  - g. Recognize appropriate actions to take in emergency situations;
  - h. Demonstrate a successful technique when administering an intramuscular and subcutaneous injection;
  - i. Demonstrate appropriate distraction techniques during medication administration;
  - j. Demonstrate the use of universal precautions as they pertain to blood borne pathogens; and
  - k. Explain the procedures for managing a medication reaction emergency.

### **Conclusion**

Pharmacy technicians may provide administration of medications or devices under the immediate supervision of a pharmacist and if the Commission has authorized the pharmacy technician to administer medications or devices by approving an AUP. Pharmacists wishing to use pharmacy technicians to administer medications or devices should submit an AUP that meets the standards identified in this guidance document.