

FAST FACTS **FOCUS** SERIES:



TECHNICIAN ENGAGEMENT & SATISFACTION

Each Friday in this 4-week series focused on pharmacy technician engagement and satisfaction, we will share what we have learned from our survey of nearly 1,000 pharmacy technicians from around the state of Wisconsin. We invite you to [SHARE](#) your own success stories of what you have done to improve technician engagement and satisfaction within your own pharmacy team.

WEEK 2: ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Issues with recruitment and retention of pharmacy technicians have been an ongoing problem for many pharmacies across the state. A recent Wisconsin Hospital Association survey demonstrated an increase in hospital-based pharmacy technician vacancy rates. From 2014 to 2015, the vacancy rate increased from 3.2 to 5.2 percent, a 65% increase.¹ Strategies to enhance recruitment and retention include providing a pathway for advancement to reframe the perception of pharmacy technician positions as a long-term career opportunity. A career ladder helps to solve recruitment issues and reduce turnover by integrating entry-level positions and pairing them with education and skill building options. Career ladders benefit employers by demonstrating dedication to developing internal staff. These ladders create a roadmap for employees to view the opportunities for advancement and be able to identify the criteria needed to progress from their current position. Overall having an established career ladder can help staff from feeling “stuck”, increase engagement, and improve loyalty to the organization.

Successful career ladders require a strategic and thoughtful plan. Main elements of a career ladder planning include:

Assessment

- How will your pharmacy benefit?
- What goals are there for the initiative?
- How will the ladder add to workforce development?
- What skill levels need to be addressed by the career ladder?

Ladder Development

- Define the title and role of each job description
- Determine the following:
 - Minimum work experience, education, licensure, or certification requirements
 - Supervisory duties, if applicable
 - Required skills and knowledge
 - Competency measurement
 - Process for advancement
 - Salary/wage range
- Place and link positions to develop a vertical progression or horizontal linkage

Collaboration

- Gain feedback from current employees on framework
- Work with human resources department to optimize ladder to match organization's strategic plan
- Incorporate ladder into recruitment strategies

At each tier of the ladder, the level of complexity, qualifications, and pay of the position increases. Think about the concrete differences between the positions and be sure to highlight these differences. Identify what development will need to happen to move up to the next level. Use current employees to identify experiences which were key to their professional development. Consider what a supervisor is looking for in a competent employee. Keep in mind where the pharmacy is and where it would like to go in the future (i.e. expansion of services). Build the career ladder to fit where the pharmacy will be in the next 5 years. The more detail provided in the ladder, the more useful it will be to front-line staff.

References:

1. Wisconsin Hospital Association, Wisconsin Health Care Workforce 2016 Report. December 2016.
2. Developing Employee Career Paths and Ladders. *SHRM/ Globoforce*. 23 July 2015. Web. Accessed 1 Mar 2017. Available at: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/developingemployeecareerpathsandladders.aspx>.
3. Prince H, Mills J. *Career ladders: a guidebook for workforce intermediaries*. Workforce Innovation Networks. Jobs for the future. 2003. Web. Accessed 1 Mar 2017. Available at: <http://careerladdersproject.org/docs/Career%20Ladders%20A%20Guidebook.pdf>.