



# Preface to the Fourth Edition

The earliest mentions of people who specialized in the use of plants and herbal products in recorded history were in ancient Babylon and China, both at about BC 2000. For most of the time since then, pharmacists, and more recently pharmacy technicians, have focused on preparing and dispensing medications for specific patients. Whether making herbal poultices and decoctions in earlier centuries or dispensing injectable medicines and biosimilars today, pharmacy has been concentrated for centuries almost solely on delivering a physical product—the drug.

In recent decades, we have seen rapid advances in drug discovery and significant professional and legislative progress, including pharmacist-specific provisions of the Medicare Modernization and Affordable Care Acts and value-based care, and a growing number of advanced clinical roles and responsibilities for both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented need for all health care professionals to expand their roles to ensure that patients have access to much-needed care, medications, and vaccines. Today, these and many other factors have led us to a new professional landscape for pharmacy technicians. This landscape includes increasing technician responsibilities in the medication preparation and dispensing process and opportunities for supportive or direct patient care roles in tech-check-tech, medication reconciliation, medication history, immunization administration, and other innovative services.

This changing health care landscape has been matched by novel opportunities for pharmacy technicians to grow and develop

professionally. In March 2019, the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) launched the first of its new certificate programs to provide opportunities for advanced formal training and recognition for technicians in the areas of product verification, medication histories, hazardous drug management, controlled substances, third-party billing, and immunizations. For the first time ever, PTCB-certified pharmacy technicians who meet certain requirements are eligible to earn an Advanced Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT-Adv) credential. These certificate programs and advanced credentialing opportunities join PTCB's Compounded Sterile Product Technician certification exam that launched in 2017.

The fourth edition of this book has been updated to reflect the needs of this changing landscape for pharmacy technicians. The content has been revised throughout to include information that technicians

need to know in these advanced roles and is now aligned with the 4 domains of the PTCB certification exam to make preparation for the exam simpler. A new chapter has been added to describe these professional growth and development opportunities. And there is an increased emphasis on patient safety and the pharmacy technician's role in patient-centered care activities throughout the text, consistent with current and emerging practice.

With these increasing opportunities, the profession has moved beyond an era in which a single textbook can meet all of the pharmacy technician's educational needs. This is a landmark achievement for pharmacy technicians. We hope this revised edition of the *Complete Review for the Pharmacy Technician* provides a starting point for many current and potential pharmacy technicians to explore new horizons in this profession.

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