



BOARD OF PHARMACY SPECIALTIES NATIONAL FACT SHEET

What is the Board of Pharmacy Specialties?

Founded in 1976 as an autonomous division of the American Pharmacists Association, BPS is the premiere organization to provide specialty certification and recertification of pharmacists. Board certification through BPS is recognized as the gold standard for determining which pharmacists are qualified to contribute at advanced practice levels.

What is the mission of BPS?

With people living longer, healthcare costs continuing to skyrocket and chronic disease spiraling out of control, the mission of the Board of Pharmacy Specialties is to improve patient care through recognition and promotion of specialized training, knowledge, and skills in pharmacy and specialty board certification of pharmacists. This is accomplished by:

- Establishing the standards for identification and recognition of pharmacy specialties;
- Developing standards of eligibility, knowledge and skills as the basis for board certification;
- Developing and administering a valid process to evaluate the knowledge and skills of pharmacists;
- Providing leadership for the profession of pharmacy in the discussion, evolution, direction and recognition of specialty board certification of pharmacists; and
- Establishing and promoting, in collaboration with stakeholders, the value of pharmacy specialization and board certification.

What is the difference between Pharmacist Licensure and Board Certification of Pharmacists?

Pharmacists in the United States are required to complete a minimum of six years of study at an accredited school or college of pharmacy which results in the Doctor of Pharmacy degree. Upon graduation, students also must pass a state licensure exam in order to practice pharmacy.

How do licensed pharmacists become BPS board certified?

BPS certification is a voluntary process by which a pharmacist's education, experience, knowledge and skills in a particular specialty practice area are confirmed as beyond what is required for licensure. To become BPS Board Certified, licensed pharmacists must have gained a certain number of years of experience practicing in the specialty area and pass a very rigorous examination. After becoming BPS board certified, the pharmacist must maintain their certification by completing specific education programs approved by the Board of Pharmacy Specialties.

How many pharmacists are BPS board certified?

There are nearly 13,000 BPS board certified pharmacists worldwide. The number of BPS board certified pharmacists has doubled over the past five years and increased by 20% over the past year. BPS is reviewing critical care pharmacy and pediatric pharmacy and expects to double both the number of specialties and board certified pharmacists in the next five years.

Which specialties can pharmacists become BPS board certified in?

Currently pharmacists can become BPS board certified in six specialties: ambulatory care pharmacy, nuclear pharmacy, nutrition support pharmacy, oncology pharmacy, pharmacotherapy and psychiatric pharmacy.

How many pharmacists are BPS board certified in each specialty?

- Ambulatory Care Pharmacy – 511
- Nuclear Pharmacy – 524
- Nutrition Support Pharmacy – 482
- Oncology Pharmacy – 1,244
- Pharmacotherapy – 9,422
- Psychiatric Pharmacy – 684

(more)

Why is it important to have board certified pharmacists integrated in the healthcare team?

It is critical to have highly knowledgeable and specially trained board certified pharmacists, who understand complex medications, working directly with healthcare providers to design new or modify existing medication regimens; monitor for and prevent adverse medication reactions or interactions; recommend medications that are as effective but less expensive, where available; and improve patient outcomes.

Do others recognize these benefits?

Through the rigorous standards mandated by BPS board certification and recertification, the specialty-credentialed pharmacist stands out as the most qualified to take on today's expanding expectations of patients, physicians, insurance companies, employers and others who recognize the increasing need for a team approach to healthcare.

What motivates a pharmacist to become BPS board certified?

BPS board certification enables pharmacists to differentiate and affirm their knowledge and skills to provide more comprehensive and complex care; be prepared to step into pharmacy's evolving position on the multidisciplinary treatment team; improve their standing in a competitive employment market; experience increased recognition from healthcare professionals; and enjoy rewards in salary, promotions and new practice opportunities.