

## Leveraging Tech-Check-Tech in the Community Pharmacy to Advance Quality

by Lauren Putterman, PharmD

For over 10 years, institutional pharmacies across Wisconsin have been utilizing Tech-Check-Tech (TCT) to allow pharmacists to redeploy time toward performing clinical services. The TCT workflow in combination with collaborative practice is the means by which pharmacists can broadly optimize care. Institutional TCT programs engage eligible, properly trained, and validated pharmacy technicians to complete final unit-dose product verification prior to distribution throughout the hospital.<sup>1-3</sup> Studies dating back to the 1970s show technicians are just as accurate as pharmacist in completing final checks.<sup>4</sup> In May 2016, Rachael Fleagle, PharmD, MS, presented her proof of concept study, “Evaluation of Community Tech-Check-Tech as a Strategy for Pharmacy Practice Advancement”, that demonstrated the feasibility of implementing a TCT program in the community pharmacy setting at an academic medical center.<sup>5</sup> On a broader level, the Iowa Pharmacy Association and Drake University College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences found community pharmacy-based Tech-Check-Tech (cTCT) to be safe and enhance pharmacy patient care services.<sup>6-7</sup> Iowa has continued to expand the scope of cTCT throughout the state and has introduced two new phases of the project that enhance access to pharmacist care.<sup>8</sup> Based on the successes and promise of TCT in these exemplary institutional and community settings, the Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board (PEB) granted approval of a cTCT pilot program and a corresponding study of the pilot entitled, “Advancing Community Pharmacy Quality - A Wisconsin Statewide Research Pilot Project”.

Each chain, independent, and health-system community-based pharmacy that participates in the pilot program will be required to adhere to specific qualification, training, operational, and quality assurance

expectations. Prior to full implementation of a cTCT workflow, each participating pharmacy will be required to train their staff and technicians according to the pilot protocol. In addition, each technician that seeks to become a cTCT validated pharmacy technician (VPT) must meet specific eligibility requirements as well as complete specific didactic and practical competencies related to community pharmacy practice. Once validated, a pharmacy technician will be able to operate fully in the community pharmacy workflow by performing the final product verification to increase the amount of time the pharmacist has to leverage collaborative care and perform patient care services.

The study is being conducted by Concordia University Wisconsin and sponsored by PSW through a grant from the National Association of Chain Drug Stores. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effects of a new community pharmacy practice model designed to afford community pharmacists more time to perform collaborative practice and deliver patient care services across the state of Wisconsin. Specifically, this study aims to “implement and assess the impact of a TCT program in community pharmacies in Wisconsin on patient safety measures” and “in facilitating the provision of community pharmacist-provided services”.<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that the implementation

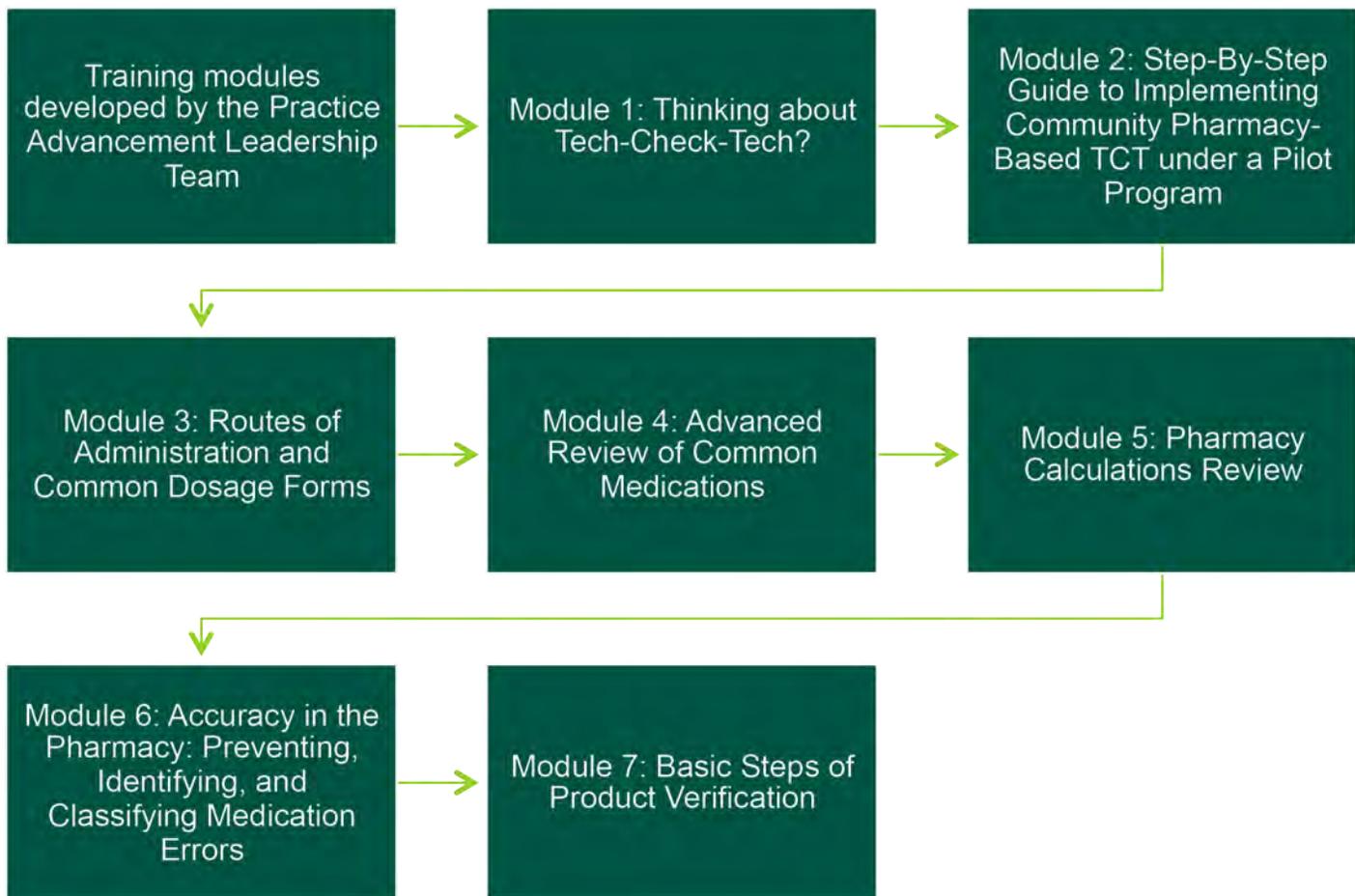
of a cTCT program is not intended to reduce pharmacist staffing levels, but instead intended to increase the availability of the pharmacist for involvement in cognitive and patient care activities, such as comprehensive medication reviews, adherence services, immunizations, tobacco cessation, and point-of-care testing.

To assist pharmacies in the establishment of cTCT programs, PSW hired Erica Martin as Program Analyst. Prior to joining PSW, Erica worked on policy and administration at the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and the Wisconsin State Senate, and continues to work at a community pharmacy. Erica’s role will provide support to the pharmacists, technicians, and staff participating in the study to develop successful cTCT programs through site specific training, project detail management, study activity coordination, and regular team meeting facilitation. PSW is happy to welcome Erica to our team and very excited to have her facilitate Wisconsin’s advancement of community pharmacy practice. ●

Lauren Putterman, PharmD is a PGY-1 Community Pharmacy Resident at Aurora Health Care Metro, Inc. in Milwaukee, WI.

*Acknowledgements: Thank you to Dan Schenk, PharmD, UW Health; Jevon Oliver, PharmD,*





*UW Health; Alyssa Billmeyer, PharmD, Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin; and Erica Martin, Program Analyst at PSW for their contributions to this article.*

### References

1. Reed M, Thomley S, Ludwig B, Rough S. Experience with a “tech-check-tech” program in an academic medical center. *Am J Health Syst Pharm.* 2011;68(19):1820-1823.
2. Ambrose PJ, Saya FG, Lovett LT, Tan S, Adams DW, Shane R. Evaluating the accuracy of technicians and pharmacists in checking unit dose medication cassettes. *Am J Health Syst Pharm.* 2002;59(12):1183-1188.
3. Klammer GA, Ensom RJ. Pharmacy technician refill checking: safe and practical. *Can J Hosp Pharm.* 1994;47(3):117-9, 122-123.
4. Grogan JE, Hanna JA, Haight RA. A study of accuracy of pharmacy technicians working in a unit dose system. *Hosp Pharm.* 1978;13(4):194-5, 199.
5. Fleagle R. Evaluation of community tech-check-tech as a strategy for pharmacy practice advancement. University of Wisconsin - Madison; 2016.
6. Myers M, Pudlo A. A pharmacy pilot or demonstration research project for a new practice model for community pharmacy. Submitted to the Iowa Board of Pharmacy; 2016. Retrieved from: [https://pharmacy.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/01/npm\\_phase\\_1\\_final\\_bop\\_report-deidentified.pdf](https://pharmacy.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/01/npm_phase_1_final_bop_report-deidentified.pdf)

7. Myers M, Pudlo A. A pharmacy pilot or demonstration research project for a new practice model for community pharmacy. Submitted to the Iowa Board of Pharmacy; 2016. Retrieved from: [https://pharmacy.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/01/npm\\_phase\\_2\\_quarter\\_3\\_bop\\_report\\_-\\_deidentified.pdf](https://pharmacy.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/01/npm_phase_2_quarter_3_bop_report_-_deidentified.pdf)
8. Myers M, Pudlo A, Andreski M. A pharmacy pilot or demonstration research project for a new practice model for community

pharmacy. Submitted to the Iowa Board of Pharmacy; 2016. Retrieved from: [https://pharmacy.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/06/npm\\_phase\\_3\\_part1.pdf](https://pharmacy.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/06/npm_phase_3_part1.pdf)

9. Martin E, Sorum S. Advancing community pharmacy quality - a wisconsin statewide research pilot project. Proceedings of the Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board meeting; 2016 Sep 22; Madison, WI.

