

Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties

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Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties Approves New Content Outline for Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacist Certification

(Washington, DC) -- The Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties (BPS), an agency whose purpose is to recognize pharmacy specialties and certify pharmacists' knowledge and skills at the advanced practice level, announces the completion of its Task Analysis Update and approval of new Examination Content Outline for its Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacist certification process.

As part of the BPS commitment to maintaining a psychometrically sound, legally defensible specialty certification system, periodic updates of the Task Analysis underlying each specialty are required. This process ensures that the certifications continue to accurately reflect current practice in the field.

BPS contracted with the Professional Examination Service (PES) a respected educational testing firm to conduct a practice analysis of psychiatric pharmacy specialists. The purpose of this study was to:

- Gather evidence to support the ongoing development of the Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacy Specialty Certification Program
- Identify the primary tasks performed by psychiatric pharmacy specialists and the knowledge necessary to perform such tasks
- Ensure the practice analysis accurately reflects current, best-practice activities in the psychiatric pharmacy profession.

News Release

A Practice Analysis Task Force of subject matter experts was assembled to work with the psychometrician to revise the specialty's previous practice analysis, focusing on changes in the practice. Members of this task force included:

Charles Caley, PharmD, BCPP
Lawrence Cohen, PharmD, BCPP
Julie Cold Kissack, PharmD, BCPP
Jonathan P. Lacro, PharmD, BCPS, BCPP
Maria Llana Posey, PharmD, BCPP
Ann L. Richards, PharmD, BCPP
Jerry McKee, PharmD, BCPP
Michelle Twitty, PharmD, BCPP
Nancy Brahm, BS, BCPP
Nicholas Votolato, BS, BCPP

Following this work, a validation survey was constructed to determine if the practice analysis accurately described the job-related activities of a BCPP. The survey, consisting of eight sections, was field tested, and sent by e-mail to the entire population of 498 Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacists.

The return rate for the survey was 41%, higher than the rates obtained for most similar surveys conducted for other professions. The results were analyzed by staff of the Professional Examination Service, and preliminary conclusions were reviewed by the Practice Analysis Task Force.

On the basis of extended discussions, the BPS Specialty Council on Psychiatric Pharmacy developed revised test specifications or content outline incorporating the following:

- Increased focus on the profiles derived from the most-recently licensed respondents;
- The adoption of revised percentage weights for the three domains (*Clinical Skills and Therapeutic Management*, 65%; *Education and Dissemination of Information*, 25%; and *Clinical Administration*, 10%);

- The use of the domains and knowledge statements as the primary organizing structure for the test specifications;
- The use of a rubricing system by which (a) test items would be classified by domain, task, and knowledge, and (b) the forms of the examination would be constructed so as to reflect the process-based weights in the test specifications;
- The inclusion of categories of disorders as an element in the item classification scheme.

The resulting new Content Outline/Test Specifications for the BPS Psychiatric Pharmacy Specialty Certification Examination was approved by the full BPS Board on October 22, 2005. The new Content Outline may be accessed on the BPS web page, www.bpsweb.org, under the Specialties tab.

The **Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties (BPS)** was founded by the American Pharmaceutical Association (now the American Pharmacists Association, APhA) in January 1976 to recognize specialties and certify pharmacists in specialized areas of advanced pharmacy practice. Five specialties are currently recognized by BPS: 1) nuclear pharmacy, since 1978; 2) nutrition support pharmacy, since 1988; 3) pharmacotherapy, since 1988; 4) psychiatric pharmacy, since 1992; and 5) oncology pharmacy, since 1996. Approximately 4500 pharmacist specialists are currently certified by BPS.