BPS FACT SHEET

What is the Board of Pharmacy Specialties?
The Board of Pharmacy Specialties, the premiere post-licensure certification agency for the pharmacy profession, was established in 1976 as an autonomous division of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). Board certification through BPS is recognized worldwide as the gold standard for determining which pharmacists are uniquely qualified to contribute at advanced practice levels.

What does BPS do?
BPS provides leadership for the profession of pharmacy in the discussion, evolution, direction and recognition of specialty board certification of pharmacists; establishes and promotes, in collaboration with stakeholders, the value of pharmacy specialization and board certification; establishes the standards for identification and recognition of pharmacy specialties; establishes standards of eligibility, knowledge and skills for pharmacists as the basis for board certification; develops and administers a valid process to evaluate the knowledge and skills for recognition of board certified pharmacists; and assesses and recognizes the continued eligibility, knowledge, and skills of board certified pharmacist specialist through a valid recertification process.

How many pharmacists are currently BPS board certified?
Worldwide there are more than 46,000 pharmacists who are BPS board certified in ambulatory care pharmacy, cardiology pharmacy, compounded sterile preparations critical care pharmacy, geriatric pharmacy, infectious diseases pharmacy, nuclear pharmacy, nutrition support pharmacy, oncology pharmacy, pediatric pharmacy, pharmacotherapy and psychiatric pharmacy. Pharmacists will be able to sit for the solid organ transplantation pharmacy exam for the first time in the fall of 2020.

What sets BPS board certified pharmacists apart from other pharmacists?
As a result of the rigorous education and training standards mandated by the Board of Pharmacy Specialties, the BPS certified pharmacist stands out as the most qualified to take on today’s expanding expectations of patients, healthcare providers, employers, insurance companies and others who recognize the increasing need for a team approach to healthcare.

In what settings do BPS board certified pharmacists work?
BPS board certified pharmacists practice in a wide variety of settings including health systems, hospitals, community pharmacies, nuclear pharmacies, cancer centers, physician offices, outpatient clinics and academia.
What role does the BPS board certified pharmacist play as an integrated member of the healthcare team?
Through medication management, coordination of care, patient advocacy, wellness and health promotion, triage and referral, and patient education, BPS board certified pharmacists are responsible for addressing the complex medication needs of patients in all practice settings. Because of their education, training and highly specialized knowledge, doctors and other healthcare providers also depend on BPS board certified pharmacists to design new or modify existing medication regimens; monitor for and prevent adverse reactions or interactions; and recommend the most cost-effective treatments.

What role do board certified pharmacists play directly in improving patient outcomes?
Improved outcomes in patient care are the primary purpose of specialization in any healthcare profession. With specialty-trained pharmacists as part of the collaborative care team, enhanced patient satisfaction has been documented with fewer complications in drug treatment; improved laboratory monitoring; reductions in unnecessary medications; and shorter hospital stays resulting in lower treatment costs.

What motivates a pharmacist to become board certified?
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.

What other specialties is BPS currently pursuing?
BPS has received a petition to recognize Emergency Medicine Pharmacy as a specialty. BPS approved a role delineation study in Pain Management Pharmacy.

How does BPS identify a new specialty and how long does the process take?
The BPS board considers a number of factors including societal need, the presence of accredited pharmacist residency training programs in these areas and feedback from various professional organizations. The complete process from delineation studies to the administration of a certification exam in a new specialty takes approximately three years to complete.

What is the goal of the Board of Pharmacy Specialties?
With people living longer, healthcare costs continuing to skyrocket and chronic disease spiraling out of control, BPS hopes to increase the number and recognition of board certified pharmacists to help improve public health, safety and wellness; reduce medication errors; improve patient outcomes; shorten hospital stays; reduce complications; lower healthcare costs; and play an increasingly active role in making our healthcare system more efficient and effective.