Demand For BPS Board Certified Pharmacists Continues To Increase: Complex medication regimens and challenges in healthcare delivery contribute to exponential growth
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More than one half of Americans use at least one prescription medication, and U.S. drug expenditures now exceed $320 billion a year.[1] With increasing challenges in the delivery of healthcare, coupled with the complexity of medication regimens, the demand for pharmacists who are BPS board certified is growing exponentially, according to the Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS).

"Nearly 13,000 pharmacists are BPS board certified in the U.S. -- an increase of 20% over last year and double the number over the past five years," said BPS Executive Director William M. Ellis, RPh, MS. "BPS board certification is recognized as the 'gold standard' for determining which pharmacists are qualified to contribute at advanced patient care levels."

BPS certification is a voluntary process by which a pharmacist's education, experience, knowledge and skills in a particular practice area are confirmed beyond what is required for licensure. BPS board certified pharmacists are uniquely trained and educated to manage patients with complex or special medication therapy needs.

Pharmacists can become BPS board certified in six specialty areas: ambulatory care pharmacy, nuclear pharmacy, nutrition support pharmacy, oncology pharmacy, psychiatric pharmacy and pharmacotherapy. Each specialty is overseen by a specialty council comprised of pharmacists board certified in that area. BPS currently is evaluating critical care pharmacy and pediatric pharmacy, and plans to double the number of specialties for which pharmacists can become BPS board certified by 2016.

"Depending on their specialty, these highly trained pharmacists assist in designing or modifying existing medication regimens; monitor for and prevent adverse medication reactions; customize medication regimens for patients taking multiple medications; and recommend the most effective treatments," Ellis said.

Increasingly employers, insurers, physicians and other healthcare professionals understand the expertise that BPS board certified pharmacists bring to patients and the entire healthcare team.

"BPS board certification raises the bar on the knowledge and skill set for those that are certified have and dramatically improves the potential for better patient outcomes," said Dr. Sheila A. Haas, RN, FAAN, professor at the Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing at Loyola University Chicago.

"All of our Clinical Pharmacy Specialists -- approximately 100 -- are BPS board certified, which ensures that they have been thoroughly trained and tested," said Kaiser Permanente Colorado Executive Director of Pharmacy Operations and Therapeutics, Dennis K. Helling, PharmD, FCCP. "These pharmacists are experts in medication therapy. Employers should recognize and take advantage of the knowledge that BPS board certified specialists bring to the healthcare team."
About the Board of Pharmacy Specialties

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS) was established in 1976 as an autonomous division of the American Pharmacists Association. BPS is internationally recognized as the premiere board certification organization for licensed pharmacists. Currently there are 12,889 BPS board certified pharmacists in the U.S. and Puerto Rico; and an additional 782 BPS board certified pharmacists in 32 countries worldwide.