

PHARMACIST SPOTLIGHT

Nevada Society of Health-System Pharmacists

Board-Certified Sterile Compounding Pharmacist in Nevada

Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS) board certification is an excellent opportunity for pharmacists to achieve the gold standard recognition for their patient care. Additionally, pursuing a nationally-recognized certification allows pharmacists to differentiate themselves and be acknowledged for their expertise. Specialties offered through BPS board certification include the following:

Ambulatory Care, Cardiology, Compounded Sterile Preparations (BCSCP), Critical

Care, Geriatric, Infectious Diseases, Nuclear, Nutrition Support, Oncology, Pediatric, Pharmacotherapy, Psychiatric, and Solid Organ Transplantation. The variety of specialties pharmacists can receive certification in has become more expansive as pharmacy practice continues to grow within the multidisciplinary approach to patient care.



David Halterman, PharmD, BCSCP from Dignity Health St. Rose Dominican recently received his certification in Compounded Sterile Preparations Pharmacy, which is one of the more recent and unique specialties. He is the current pharmacy supervisor for the Siena campus and remains heavily involved with pharmacy operations on the other two campuses in Southern Nevada.

Describe your journey so far

In my career, I have been a resident, staff pharmacist, clinical specialist, supervisor, manager, director and CEO. Over twenty four years, I have seen and done quite a bit, but always in the hospital setting. For the past sixteen years, I have been in some sort of management and leading a team is by far my favorite part of the job. I've worked in facilities of less than 25 beds to as big as 650 beds and each setting is unique and exciting and presents its own challenges. For the past six years, I've held the job as pharmacy supervisor here at St. Rose Siena. This has, to be honest, been the longest time I have been in a job with the same title in my life.

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Why did you decide to get BCSCP certification?

I decided to get BCSCP certification for two reasons. First, for myself. I wanted to see if what I was learning and doing was at the level I thought it was – which was more than the average pharmacist seemed to know. My reasons for delving into in the first place were “well, someone has to do it” but I came to really enjoy the sterile compounding arena and wanted to make sure I was operating at the highest level. That lead to my second reason, which is to show that I was an expert in the field, especially since it was so new. Whether we like it or not, those initials behind your name sometimes carry weight that will get a message heard that wouldn’t otherwise.

How does the certification further your practice?

The certification does a number of things for my practice. First, it shows others that I have done the work and I know my stuff. As I mentioned earlier, sometimes just having the certification lends the ‘air of authenticity’ that you would otherwise get. Second, it allows me to access others who are also certified and know that we already have a baseline knowledge to begin discussions. With such a new field, getting over the initial awkwardness of ‘how much do you know’ is much easier when each of you know the other has the background and you can start on the problem right away. Third, it shows to my staff that the work I do, sometimes buried at a desk out of sight, is not meaningless. And, again, it acts as validation for when I initiate new policies or procedures.

What advice do you have for student pharmacists and pharmacists interested in this specialty?

For younger pharmacists that want to get into the compounding arena, I would provide a ton of encouragement, but also some caution. This is a field that is ripe for tremendous growth in the pharmacy world over the next 10-20 years and those that excel can carve a name for themselves and lead pharmacy into a new era of safety. That said, it is an extremely niche market that is, in some ways, further from ‘standard practice’ than any other sub-specialty of pharmacy. Compounding, as important as it is, is a very small part of the overall practice of pharmacy and the longer you are buried in it, the further you get away from your peers. That’s okay. We need experts in this field, but anyone going this direction needs to understand that.

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