



Novel Strategies for Stabilizing the Pharmacy Technician Pipeline in Central Oregon

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5fKM61AT-Q&t=53s>

Song “Pills” by St. Vincent

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwFx0ROBf7o>

<https://kpic.com/news/local/pharmacies-with-staffing-shortages-dealing-with-long-lines-upset-customers>

Disclosures



- We'd like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Central Oregon Health Council, who funded this workforce program with an \$80,000 community development grant in October 2022.
- Sheila S. Jordan is the founder and owner of workability LLC.

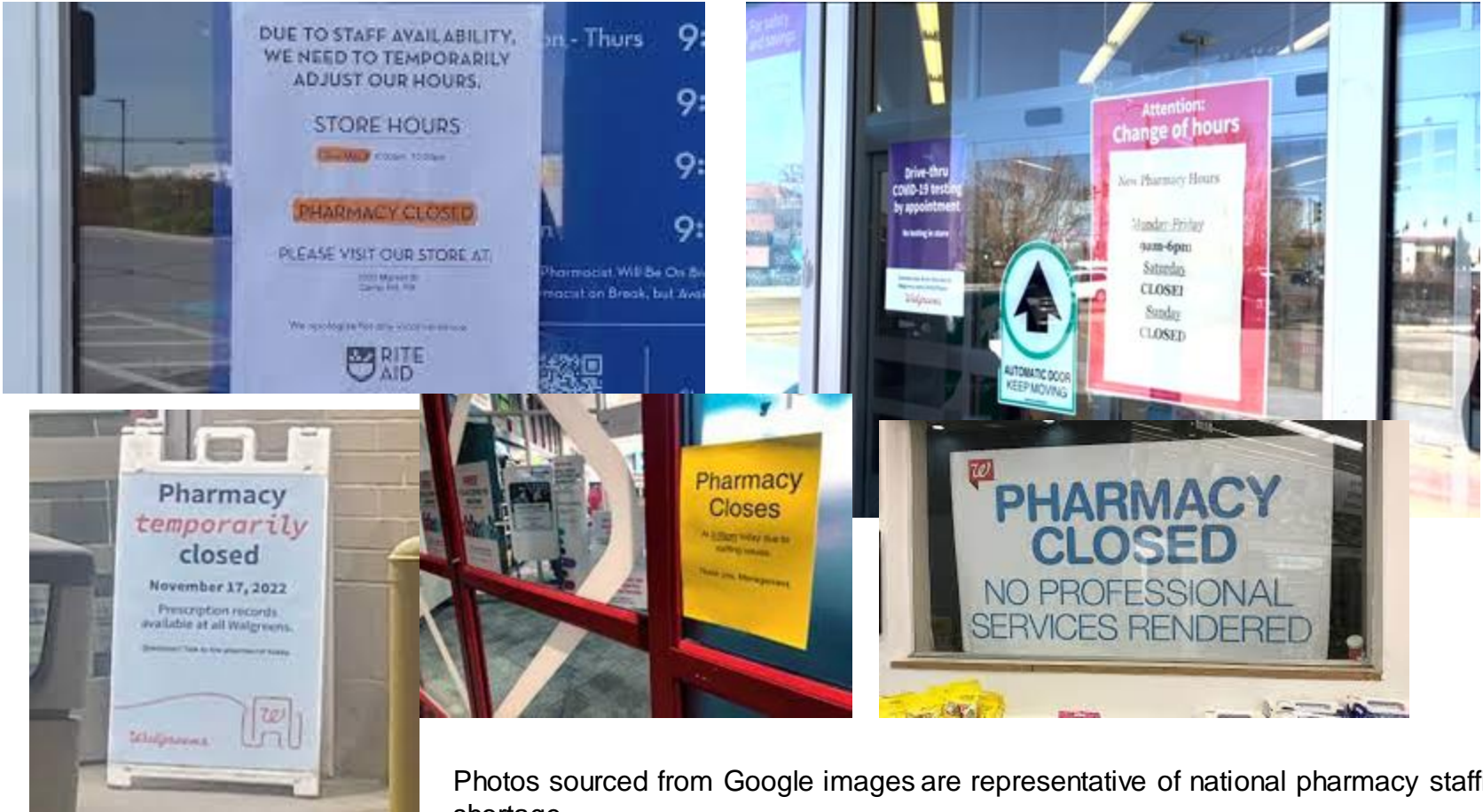
Founded in 2021 as www.workability.one, a specialty job board that connects neurodiverse and disabled talent with inclusive employers worldwide. We also provide Job Placement Services for Oregon's Vocational Rehabilitation Dept.

Learning Objectives

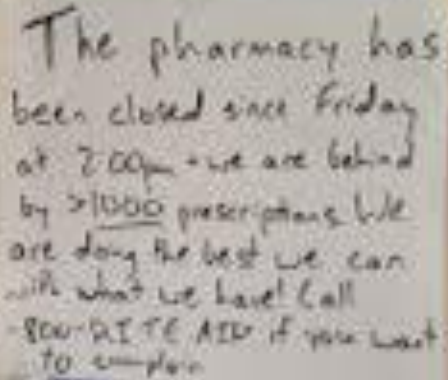


- Recall the retail pharmacy environment at the height of the pandemic, when staff shortages forced store closures.
- Describe how workability identified a learning gap and developed its needs assessment for this grant proposal.
- Describe educational program strategies.
- Share results of educational program activities and review licensing results.

Familiar Signs at the Height of the Pandemic



Photos sourced from Google images are representative of national pharmacy staffing shortage.



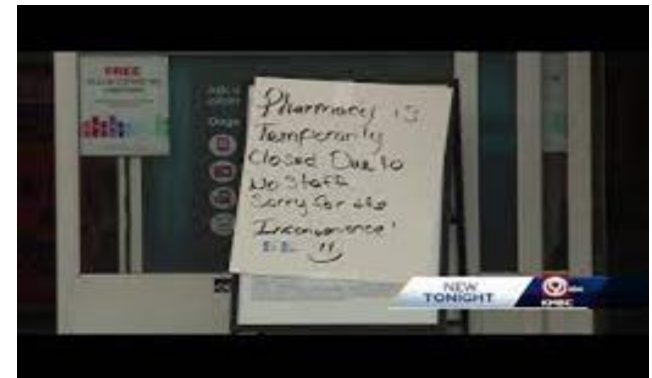
The pharmacy has been closed since Friday at 2:00pm - we are behind by >1000 prescriptions. We are doing the best we can with what we have! Call 1-800-RITE-AID if you want to complain.



PHARMACIST NOT ON DUTY.
PRESCRIPTIONS MAY NOT BE SOLD OR
FILLED AT THIS PHARMACY.

Due to lack of Pharmacists at an area level our pharmacy is unfortunately closed for 10/15/21. We do apologize for the inconvenience this may cause. The closest open pharmacy is 3030 University Ave.

“The pharmacy has been closed since Friday at 2 p.m. and we are behind by >1000 prescriptions. We are doing the best we can with what we have! Call 1-800-RITE-AID if you want to complain.”



Think Out Loud

<https://www.opb.org/article/2021/11/12/pharmacies-across-oregon-struggling-with-staffing-shortages/>

Needs Assessment!!!



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Pharmacies Across Oregon Struggle With Staff

Shortages

*“There is a huge pharmacy technician shortage right now in the state of Oregon. I talked to one independent pharmacy owner in Eastern Oregon who said, **‘It’s not like I can just post an ad. And it doesn’t matter what I want to pay someone. There isn’t another pharmacy technician in my community that can come to work for me right away. It’s going to take me - I have to hire someone fresh, I have to train them over a year. This is not something I can fix right away.’**”* - Kevin Russell, Central Oregon Regional Director on the Oregon State Pharmacy Association Board

- Oregon Public Broadcasting “Think Out Loud,” November 21, 2021

Height of the COVID-19 Pandemic



- An already existing shortage of pharmacy technicians in Oregon.
- The Board of Pharmacy had reduced the barriers to becoming a Pharmacy Technician: formal training requirements and CPhT certification was no longer required in order to become licensed.
- Primary Requirements:
 - Age 18 and up
 - Pass the state-required Background Check

A Path to a Professional License



- Reducing financial barriers is essential to attracting a broad audience and empowering a diverse pharmacy technician workforce.
- Providing virtual courses where learners did not have to travel to participate in an on-campus class or lab
- License application fee reimbursements (\$147) removed financial barriers
- Input from retail pharmacies, including grocery store-based pharmacies was helpful in shaping the program.

Course Description

- Focus was on RETAIL – not hospital or compounding technicians
- Online, self-paced 120-Hour Course that covers all the knowledge areas required in the PTCB Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT) core competencies:
 - Federal Requirements, State Requirements and Practice Standards
 - Patient Safety and Quality Assurance
 - Order Entry and Processing, Inventory Management
 - Administrative and Management
- A 2-hour Cultural Competency for Pharmacy Technicians course was added and mandated for all grant recipients

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ONLINE PRACTICE

Sacha Koborsi-Tadros, PharmD

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www.pharmacytechscholar.com

About PharmacyTechScholar



Online education provider focused on incorporating best practices for professional and adult education to facilitate career advancement:

- Self-directed learning
- Regular assessment and feedback
- Flexibility
- Clear structure and navigation
- Collaboration and community
- Use of multimedia
- Continuous improvement

- The 120-hours to CPhT course is recognized by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board as a qualifying education program for the Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam
- Program director is a doctorally trained, registered pharmacist with experience in hospital and community pharmacy, pharmacy entrepreneurship, and the pharmaceutical industry

Outreach Strategies



Meet Prospective Learners Where They're At:

- Radio advertising on Warm Springs Radio and La Bronca, Spanish-language radio station based in Redmond.
- Print advertising in Your Prineville Roundup and the La Pine
- Flyers at local high schools, libraries, grocery store bulletin boards
- KTVZ TV26 and ktvz.com in-depth media coverage.

Hyper Local Advertising in Underserved, Outlying Areas

Ever considered a career as a **Pharmacy Technician?**

Thanks to a grant from Central Oregon Health Council we are accepting applications to participate in a **FREE** on-line training program

To qualify you must have:

- High school diploma or GED - or be close to completing one (high school juniors & seniors who will be 18 at graduation are eligible)
- Clean driver's license
- Clean background check

What you need to do:

- Participate in on-line orientation
- Sign an educational agreement
- Complete on-line training within **SIX** months
- Participate in at least two on-line support group session per month
- Complete surveys we send
- Report back to us when you get a job - where you're working, pay rate and start dates

How we support you:

- Access to free on-line training program - no cost to you
- Once training is complete we help you apply for Oregon Pharmacy Technician license
- Online support groups
- We support you in your search for a job when you are done

APPLY NOW!

www.workability.one
look for **FREE TRAINING** postings

We will contact you within 30 days and let you know if you have been selected to participate in this program!

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Over the Air

- Warm Springs Community Radio
- *La Bronca* Spanish-language Radio Station
- KTVZ TV News Coverage

Local Newsletters and Circulars

- *Your Prineville Roundup*
- *LaPine Wisebuys*
- Flyers on community bulletin boards

Online

- www.workability.one
- Craigslist Jobs, Google Ads
- [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) groups
- ktvz.com
- Social Media Posts

Program Statistics (COHC only)



- Over 100 applications were submitted
- 36 learners enrolled in the program
- 27 learners remained in the program
- 9 learners have completed the cultural competency portion
- 4 learners have completed the program in its entirety to date
 - Range of 49 to 188 days total to complete, with a mean of 137 days

Course Participation Observations



- Grant recipients were more likely to participate in live virtual classroom discussions on the Pharmacy Tech Scholar platform than other learners
- Grant recipients were more likely to engage in platform messaging with the program director regarding course material and pharmacy career paths
- Elevated levels of engagement were associated with increased pace in completing the program and with course exam performance
- Learners reported a high level of satisfaction with the online course platform, availability of the program director for questions and guidance, and the material
- Learners reported mainly positive experiences with the cultural competency module

So, who earned their license?

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	Participant	Coursework Completed	Cultural Competency	Resides in...	Works in...	Bilingual
1	Aiden G.	29%	100%	Bend	NE Bend	
2	Carol F.	37%	100%	Powell Butte	NE Bend	
3	Natalie F.	81%	100%	Bend	Bend	
4	Julie W.	100%	100%	Redmond	Redmond	
5	Luke R.	100%	100%	Bend	SE Bend	
6	Murray C	100%	100%	Bend	Bend	
7	Rodrigo B.	94%	-	Bend	Bend	✓

So, who's close to completing the online coursework?

	Participant	Location	120-Hour Course Percent Completed	Cultural Competency	Bilingual
1	Chelsea P.	Metolius	86%	100	✓
2	Natalie F.	Bend	81%	100	
3	Connie K.	Madras	78%	0	
4	DeLora L.	Prineville	75%	0	✓
5	Luz J.	Prineville	67%	0	✓
6	Joseph P.	Bend	67%	100	
7	Desiree B.	Prineville	32%	50%	
	Emily R.	Bend	13%	100	✓

Percentage completed as of Sunday 10/8/23

Our Observations, Projected Results

- Once learners hit 75% course completion, we encouraged them to submit their application for a technician license.
- Once they got their license, they started working, regardless of whether they completed the online course.
- 12 to 15 licensed Pharmacy Technicians by end of 2023.
- Another five qualified to work as Pharmacy Clerks by end of 2023
- Cultural Competency CE Requirement integrated into coursework

New Career, Substantial Increase in Pay

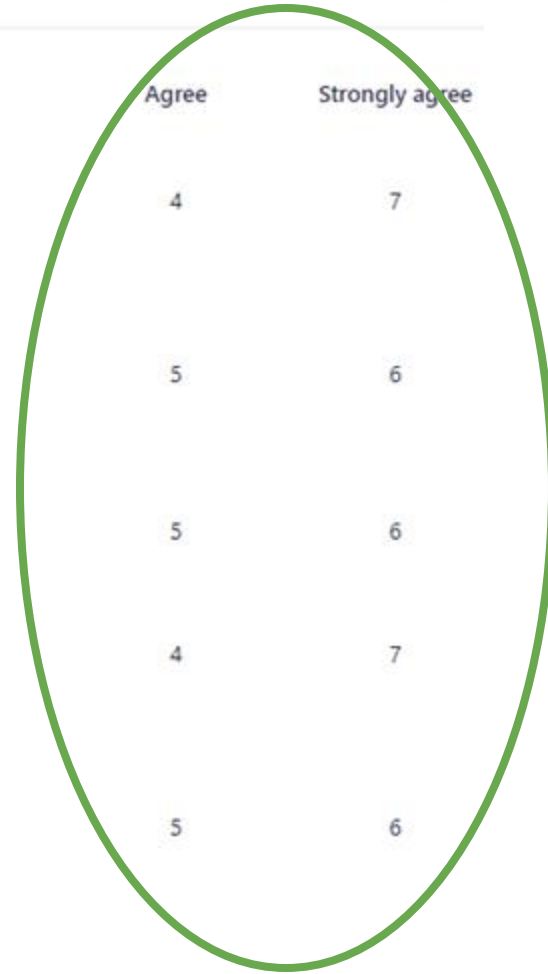
According to Indeed, the average Fred Meyer Certified Pharmacy Technician hourly pay in Oregon is approximately \$21.77, which is 21% above the national average.

Prior to earning a pharm tech license, learners made about \$16 per hour. **30% increase in hourly pay.**

Cultural Competency Program Survey Results

Please rate whether or not you feel each of the following objectives was met:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Identify cultural factors that may influence provider and patient behaviors	0	0	0	4	7
Command knowledge on how to maintain a non-judgmental and respectful environment during patient encounters	0	0	0	5	6
Define cultural competence and related concepts	0	0	0	5	6
Command knowledge of health disparities and social determinants of health	0	0	0	4	7
Identify specific communication methods to collaborate with and empower patients in making health care decisions	0	0	0	5	6



Cultural Competency Program Survey Results

How relevant was the content to your practice?				
Not relevant at all	Minimally relevant	Somewhat relevant	Moderately relevant	Highly relevant
0	0	1	2	8

How interesting was the topic to you?				
Not interesting at all	Minimally interesting	Somewhat interesting	Moderately interesting	Highly interesting
0	1	3	2	5

Please rate the following statement: The activity was presented free from any commercial bias				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
0	0	0	1	10

Please rate the following statement: The activity was fair and balanced				
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
0	0	0	3	8

Cultural Competency Program Survey Results

Please rate the following statements in regards to the speaker:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Utilizes smooth transitions and presents information with a logical flow	0	0	0	4	7
Explains subject matter in familiar language	1	0	0	4	6
Speaks clearly and at appropriate volume and pace	0	0	0	4	7
Demonstrates comprehension of topic	0	0	1	2	8
Covers appropriate amount of material with an appropriate level of complexity	0	0	1	4	6

Cultural Competency Program Survey Results

Please rate the following statements in regards to the instructional materials

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Are of appropriate length	0	0	3	4	4
Complement the presentation	0	0	1	6	4
Can be used as a reference	0	0	0	6	5
Are well organized	0	0	0	5	6

I would recommend this CPE activity to others

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
0	0	1	6	4

Common Reasons for Withdrawing

- Husband-and-Wife CNAs who were looking for “less physically demanding” jobs in healthcare had to withdraw due to medical emergency
- Several participants landed unrelated jobs because they couldn't wait to finish the program before starting to work / earn income.
- Several decided coursework was more difficult than they expected, and that it wasn't for them.
- Some tried in earnest but couldn't get through the content.
- Lots of applicants from Madras and La Pine, though few finished.

So what did we learn?



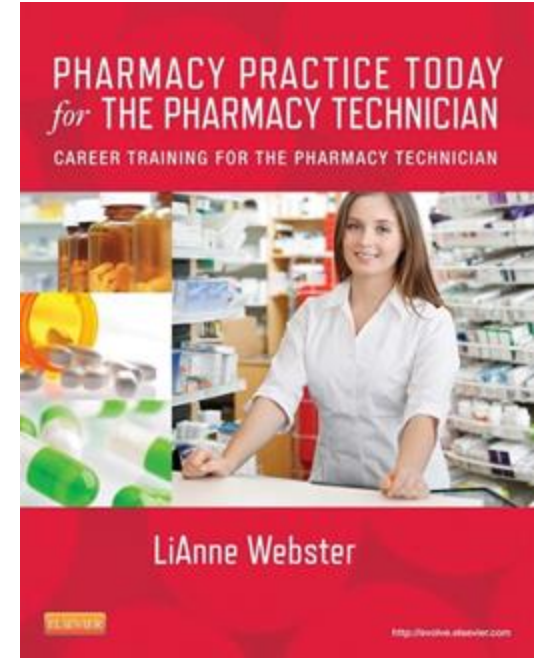
1. Life happens.
2. Courses take longer to complete than expected, because...life happens.
3. Rolling application and enrollment process was key: set start/stop dates would have been disastrous.
4. Budget for twice as long as you think is needed.
5. Local media is key to drawing applicants.
6. Most applicants were aged 45 to 64
7. Most applicants had some college but no degree
8. Several participants started the program and got jobs as Pharmacy Clerks, and were promoted to Pharmacy Technician with a few months. Enrolling in the course gave them the confidence to apply for Clerk jobs.
9. Virtual classroom sessions were key in keeping learners engaged
10. Regular check-ins keep learners on track.

So, what's next?

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We've adapted the program to meet the needs of neurodiverse and disabled high schools as part of a Pre-Employment Training Service (Pre-ETS) Program for Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation:

- 15-Hour online Introduction to Pharmacy Clerk Careers (vs. 120-Hour Test Prep for Technicians)
- 2-Hour online Cultural Competency Course
- Textbook change focuses on day-to-day operations vs. test prep
- Placement in a pharmacy environment for a Summer work experience.
- Engraved Name Badge



This Model Can Work for Rural Areas

1. Content is online and self-paced
2. Weekly, live sessions with a licensed healthcare professional is key to keeping learners engaged.
 1. Shipping a hard copy book can help cement commitment to the program.
 1. Monitoring learners' progress and conducting regular check-ins provide gentle nudges to keep learners going.



Thanks for Joining Us!

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www.workability.one

Thank You Partners!

