Lesson 4 - Pharmacy Law and Ethics
Assignment Answer Key

Assignment 1 Case Study
Review the Case Study on page 81 of the Pharmacy Technician Practice and Procedures textbook. Then answer the following question.

1. Is it good customer service to inform the patient of his daughter’s prescription? Why or why not?
   Answer: No, this is a violation of HIPAA. HIPAA was enacted to ensure that a patient’s personal health information remains confidential at all times.

Assignment 2 At Your Service
Review the At Your Service scenario on page 82 of the Pharmacy Technician Practice and Procedures textbook. Then answer the following questions.

1. Did the pharmacy technician handle the situation correctly?
   Answer: This situation is one that requires a decision to be made and therefore is not in the realm of a pharmacy technician’s responsibilities.

2. Why is this medication a controlled substance?
   Answer: Ambien is a controlled substance because it has a potential for abuse.

Assignment 3 Critical Thinking
Answer each question after thinking carefully about your responses.

1. Why should an individual be able to reimport prescriptions from Canada or another country into the United States?
   Answers will vary. Importation can give people the opportunity to purchase pharmaceutical products at a significantly lower cost (although there is no guarantee of safety).

2. Identify medications that have gone from prescription status to OTC status within the past year.
   Answers will vary. Numerous medications have gone from prescription status to OTC status. Customer education is important to promote safe and effective use of over-the-counter products.

Assignment 4 HIPAA Scenario

Tommy, a 15-year-old Austin, Texas, high school student, is being treated for a sexually transmitted disease (STD). He is embarrassed and does not want his parents to know that he came to the hospital for care. When he comes to the pharmacy to pick up his antibiotic, he asks if you have to inform his parents about the reason for his visit. When he is told that it is not required that his parents be notified, he asks if any information will be given to his parents if they initiate questioning about the care he received today.
1. Is the pharmacy allowed to inform Tommy’s parents about his treatment for an STD?
2. What is the law in your state for informing parents and guardians of the treatment of minors for STDs?
   
   **Answers:** Parents and legal guardians, acting as personal representatives, may access the healthcare records of minors in many states and in many situations. However, there are exceptions. Some states allow minors to receive care related to birth control and the treatment of STDs without parental consent and involvement. Check the specific laws for your state to ensure that Tommy’s parents cannot legally access this information without his consent prior to answering his inquiries. You should refer the patient to your supervisor. Then instruct the patient to wait for counseling by the pharmacist who is best able to interpret the state pharmacy and HIPAA law. The technician should alert the pharmacist that a patient awaits counseling on HIPAA law and PHI.

**Assignment 5 Internet Activities**  
Visit the Web sites and answer the following questions.

1. Visit [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) and identify all medications that have been recalled in the past 3 months and the reason for the recall.  
   **Answer:** Answers depend on timing.

2. Visit the Web site of your state board of pharmacy and review the cases where complaints have been filed against either a pharmacist or pharmacy technician.  
   **Answers will vary.** Reviewing these cases can help familiarize yourself with potential law suits in the field of pharmacology.

**Assignment 6 Apply Your Knowledge**

1. A prescription is called into the pharmacy for a patient and you notice on the patient’s profile that she has requested EZ-open packaging. What should you do?

   **Answer:** Have the patient sign the back of the prescription to show she has requested EZ-open packaging.

2. A patient presents a prescription for 100 tablets of Ritalin 5 mg on Monday afternoon. You notice that you have only 50 tablets and your daily delivery from your wholesaler has already arrived. What can you do?

   **Answer:** Inform the patient of the situation and provide him with following options: order the medication or attempt to locate it at another pharmacy. If the medication is being ordered for the patient you may dispense the 50 tablets in stock to the patient and provide the remaining tablets to him within 72 hours. If you are unable to have the remaining
medication within 72 hours, the remaining quantity becomes void and at that time the physician should be notified of the situation.

3. You are processing a prescription for a patient and you notice that it is contraindicated with other medications the patient is taking. What should you do?

Answer: Notify the pharmacist immediately. The pharmacist will make the decision on how to proceed.

4. The pharmacist is talking on the phone to a physician when a patient comes to the pharmacy counter and asks you to recommend an OTC medication for a specific condition. In the past, you have heard the pharmacist recommend Product X for the very same condition. What do you do and why?

Answer: Inform the patient that you will ask the pharmacist for her recommendation when she is done talking on the phone. Inform the pharmacist of the situation and allow her to make the recommendation.

5. A patient is picking up a prescription at the pharmacy and you are aware that his wife has a filled prescription awaiting her. Should you inform the patient of this situation? Why or why not?

Answer: No you should not inform the patient of the situation. It may appear that you are providing poor customer service, but you would be violating HIPAA by doing so. Only the owner of the prescription has the authority to authorize another individual to pick up the prescription.

Assignment 7 Practice Your Knowledge

Goal
To become familiar with the recent actions imposed by your state board of pharmacy on both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

Assignment
Using the Internet as a source of information, visit your state board of pharmacy’s web site and view the 10 most recent actions taken by the state board against either pharmacists or pharmacy technicians. Record the information in the following table.

Answers will vary. Reviewing these cases where pharmacists or pharmacy technicians have failed to comply can help you keep more vigilant in areas where such digression may be more likely.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Brief Description of the Incident</th>
<th>Board of Pharmacy Action</th>
<th>What Can Be Learned from This Situation?</th>
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