Medication-use technologies and pharmacy technicians will be the critical determinants in achieving the ultimate pharmacy practice model. Health information technologies adopted by hospitals and health systems have improved medication safety but have not provided a complete closed-loop system. Although pharmacy has been talking about expanding the role of technicians for more than 40 years, we have not fully made this a reality.

**Technology implementation.** The core of current medication-use technologies includes bar-code-assisted medication administration, computerized prescriber order entry, smart pumps, and the electronic health record. The adoption of these technologies has grown tremendously since 2000, yet full adoption is still below 50% nationally.1 The prospects for organizational growth of these technologies over the next 3 years may be improved because of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act.2

However, there is still concern that full system interconnectivity may not be achieved and that there will not be enough formally trained pharmacy informaticists to lead the change.

We must be proactive in strategizing and redesigning our automation and technology to best fit our future practice model. A future allowing all pharmacists to provide essential clinical services to all patients (inpatient, outpatient, medical home) will require key technological components that include a patient-centered practice model, remote and mobile capabilities, operational automation, and clinical analytics; all systems must be interoperable.

**Enhanced technician practice.** Independent pharmacy technician drug distribution models working in parallel with technology expansion are the second fundamental prerequisite for practice model evolution. While pushback is expected, the only way to move forward is to empower technicians by requiring mandatory training, documented competencies, and licensure. New skill sets, strong outcomes data, and reaching the point where pharmacists are no longer accountable for technicians must be considered. To do this, we must expect advanced technician training and embed appropriate technologies at every point of the medication-use process.

**Conclusion.** Technology and pharmacy technicians will allow us to reinvent and revolutionize pharmacy practice models. The summit consensus statements regarding these two subjects should include clear direction to hospitals, vendors, and regulatory bodies about actions they must take to advance and leverage the role of both technicians and technology in the pharmacy enterprise.

**References**


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The author has declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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