

TEXAS STATE BOARD OF PHARMACY

POSITION STATEMENT REGARDING

WORKING CONDITIONS AND COMMUNICATION IN PHARMACIES

It is the purpose of this “Statement on Working Conditions and Communication in Pharmacies” to promote the well-being of patients, and to help ensure licensees’ compliance with Board Rules relating to the operational standards of Class A, B, and C Pharmacies, specifically Board Rules 291.32(b)(1)(A), 291.53(b)(1)(A) and 291.73(b)(1)(C), which relate to adequate staffing in Class A, B, and C Pharmacies.

The Texas State Board of Pharmacy (TSBP) has received numerous letters and telephone calls from pharmacists regarding the inadequate conditions and environment in the pharmacies in which they work. Frequently, the comments involve the following issues:

- a pharmacist’s inability to take periodic breaks, such as a breaks for meals and basic human needs, especially when working long hours; and
- the inability of a pharmacy manager or pharmacist-in-charge (who is not the owner of the pharmacy) to make decisions about the operation of the pharmacy, such as the employment of a sufficient number of trained, support staff to meet the needs of the pharmacy’s patients.

TSBP recognizes that unsatisfactory working conditions in a pharmacy may involve a two-fold problem: (1) unsupportive employers; and (2) pharmacists who are allowed to take meal and rest breaks, but do not, due to a myriad of reasons. However, in the interest of the health, safety and welfare of the public and the pharmacists who are caring for the public, TSBP issues the following position statement:

- TSBP supports the concept that meal and rest breaks are basic conditions of employment in a pharmacy. Accordingly, TSBP encourages all employers to provide reasonable breaks during a regular workday for meals and rest.
- TSBP encourages all pharmacists to take meal and rest breaks when permitted. If the pharmacy has only one pharmacist on duty, appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the security of the prescription drugs in the pharmacy when the pharmacist is absent.
- TSBP discourages employers from establishing working conditions that tend to increase the stress on the dispensing pharmacists, such as setting quotas on the number of prescriptions that a pharmacist is required to dispense per hour in order to keep from being terminated or to achieve a favorable performance evaluation.
- TSBP encourages employers to empower the pharmacist-in-charge to make decisions regarding the pharmacy’s working environment, such as being able to employ additional support staff if needed.
- TSBP encourages employers to increase the opportunities for communication between employees and management. TSBP encourages employers to establish written policies and procedures to promote communication between employees and management. Such policies and procedures should permit a pharmacist to make written requests of management regarding working conditions and expect a reasonably timely response to such request.
- TSBP encourages employers to establish peer review committees (composed of employee pharmacists and management) to hear and make decisions regarding employee concerns relating to working conditions and other practice issues.
- TSBP encourages pharmacists to recommend policies and procedures to employers to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the pharmacy.

In summary, TSBP encourages pharmacists to be valuable employees and pharmacy owners to be good employers.