

Technician's association to consult on criteria for registration

"Dispensing with tradition" was the theme of the annual conference of the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK. An outline of the conference, held in Cambridge between 11 and 13 April, is given below



Handing over the chain of office: Lesley Morgan (on right of picture), the outgoing president of the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK with the new president, Darren Leech

The Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK will consult its members on the criteria for registration, according to its president, LESLEY MORGAN, speaking at the Association's annual conference. She added that in particular, this would include criteria in the "grandparent" clause. This clause, yet to be finalised, will enable pharmacy technicians without the S/NVQ Level III pharmacy services qualification, to register with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society before 1 January 2007.

The announcement came after a presentation from JANET FLINT, project manager for support staff regulation at the Society. Ms

Flint explained that the Society is pursuing protection of the "pharmacy technician" title and that from 2007, the minimum standard for entry onto the pharmacy technician register is to be the S/NVQ Level III qualification. It is clear that the Association and the Society are working together on the development of regulatory systems, as Ms Flint went on to explain that two representatives from the Association were on a steering group set up following the Society's statement of intention to regulate support staff in December 2001.

TECHNICIANS IN PALLIATIVE CARE

On the first day of the conference, JEANETTE PARRY, a pharmacy technician who has developed her role as a specialist pharmacy adviser for palliative care, explained how she has managed to bridge many of the traditional barriers to effective pharmaceutical care for terminally ill patients. As part of her role, Ms Parry has included a number of community pharma-

cists in a stock rotation scheme. This now ensures that supplies of commonly used palliative care medicines are available to patients between their visits to the Trinity Hospice, where Ms Parry is based.

WORKSHOPS

There was also a series of workshops for pharmacy technicians. These were facilitated by pharmacy technicians working in medicines information, primary care and clinical services. Speakers included the AAH Pharmacy Technician of the Year, JASON HOBSON, who works in the pharmacy-run anticoagulant clinic at Barnsley District General Hospital. Mr Hobson said that following a visit to the only other hospital he knows of where pharmacy technicians work in anticoagulant clinics, he and his colleagues have developed a robust training package to support the development of his role.

GILL HARVEY, development manager for the Medicines Management Collaborative,

This report was put together by the conference committee of the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK: Vanessa Eggerdon, Sarah Gray, Margaret Halliday, all at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, Nikki Allsop, Colchester General Hospital, Suki Tagger, Northampton General Hospital and Rachel Helliar, Swan Surgery, Bury St Edmunds

referred to Mr Hobson's presentation saying that it provides clear evidence that pharmacy technicians working in all sectors are key to helping patients manage their medicines. Ms Harvey cited a number of other projects where pharmacy technicians play a key role in the management of medicines. These include domiciliary visiting, where pharmacy technicians provide follow-up visits to patients discharged from hospital care, and a range of new and innovative projects in the primary care sector which is becoming a growing area of employment for pharmacy technicians.

UNISON

On the political front, ROGER KLINE, a consultant from Unison, told pharmacy technicians that his organisation is working with a number of the Association's national officers, in addition to pharmacy technicians



Jason Hobson: developing a robust training package for technicians in anticoagulant clinics

from the "Agenda for change" pilot sites, to ensure that a joined-up approach to job profiling for technicians was ensured. Mr Kline

said that both Unison and the Association had experienced difficulties in obtaining information from the Department of Health. The word "chaotic" was used more than once to describe the job profiling process. Mr Kline added that until an acceptable number of profiles for pharmacy technicians, at the right pay band level were developed, Unison would continue its work of campaigning on behalf of pharmacy technicians. Mr Kline stated clearly that that new levels of pay under the "Agenda for change" should take into account the new roles that pharmacy technicians were developing other than the traditional ones of dispensing and supply. Mr Kline ended his presentation by emphasising that Unison, like other trade unions, has agreed to judge the work undertaken at the pilot sites over the next year. "Only when the success, or otherwise, of this early work is clear, will Unison and other trade unions ballot their members on whether or not to accept the "Agenda for

Advertisement

change” deal in its entirety,” he concluded.

AGM

At its annual general meeting, the Association announced through its treasurer, VICKY HARMAN, that membership has tripled since 1999. Officers went on to list a number of key pharmacy and health policy documents where the Association has provided significant input or has responded directly to the content. The Association’s new five-year strategy document was also circulated to members, in which the Association states that it will continue to develop itself as the professional voice of pharmacy technicians. It is foreseen that this role will complement the regulatory function of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.

In her last presidential address, Mrs Morgan issued a direct challenge to every pharmacy technician throughout the United Kingdom. She said that she would like to



Roger Kline: Unison will continue to campaign on behalf of pharmacy technicians

see all pharmacy technicians take a more active interest in their future.

“It has never been more important for

you to ensure that your voice is heard. You are entering a period of great change over the next five years,” she said. Mrs Morgan advocated that the best way for technicians’ voices to be heard was for them to make contact with their Association.

THE NEW COMMITTEE

The chain of office was handed to the incoming president, Darren Leech, after Mrs Morgan’s close-of-conference address. A number of other changes to the Association’s executive committee were also approved at the Association’s AGM: Helen Dalrymple (Wrexham Maelor Hospital) is now vice-president, Sarah Goodson (South East education and training) takes over as education officer and Vanessa Eggerdon (education and training, Addenbrooke’s Hospital NHS Trust) is the new publicity officer. All other national posts remain unchanged.