

Pharmacist

■ Job Description

The pharmacist accurately fills and dispenses prescription and nonprescription drugs to patients; compounds medications; provides drug information to patients, health practitioners, and the general public; reviews drug therapy of patients; consults with patients and health practitioners; and conducts drug-related research.

■ Job Settings

Pharmacists are assuming traditional practice roles, providing drugs and information in community and hospital pharmacy settings, as well as in clinic and governmental settings and health maintenance organizations (HMOs). Pharmacists in newer clinical and consulting roles provide assistance to patients, physicians, and nurses, and are involved in home health care. Pharmacists are engaged in many different tasks within the pharmaceutical industry, including research, formulation, and sales. In addition, they play an important teaching and research role in schools of pharmacy, and they are involved in many other areas, from organization work, to writing, to administration.

■ Projected Need

Nationally, faster than average employment growth is expected for pharmacists. In Illinois, employment of pharmacists is expected to grow at an average rate through 2010.

Slow job growth for pharmacists is expected in retail pharmacies. In trying to cut costs, these pharmacies are using more technicians and machines to dispense drugs. Employment in hospitals is also expected to grow slowly as patients stay there for shorter periods.

However, new jobs are opening for pharmacists in managed care. In these jobs, pharmacists analyze trends in drug use for patients on managed care plans. Fast growth is also expected for pharmacists trained in research or disease management. In addition, growth will occur for pharmacists trained to determine the costs and benefits of different drug therapies.

The increasing number of middle-aged and elderly people will spur demand for pharmacies in all settings. This is because older people tend to use more medications. In addition, advances in new drugs, and consumers seeking more information about drugs, could also increase employment for pharmacists.

In Illinois, there were about 10,460 people employed in this medium-sized occupation in 2000.

■ Salaries

Earnings depend on the location, size and type of employer, and on the education level, job duties, and responsibilities of the pharmacist.

Nationally, the median wage for pharmacists is \$36.00 per hour. Half of all pharmacists earn between \$31.11 and \$40.98 per hour.

In Illinois, pharmacists earn a median wage of \$37.00 per hour. Wages in selected cities are given below:

City	Median Hourly Wage
Bloomington-Normal	\$36.50
Champaign-Urbana	\$37.11
Chicago	\$37.51
Decatur	\$36.97
Kankakee	\$34.49
Moline-Rock Island	\$34.84
Peoria-Pekin	\$37.69
Rockford	\$38.30
Springfield	\$33.76
St. Louis	\$34.47

■ Differences in Training

The Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree is usually a six-year program. Students complete two years of pre-pharmacy course work and four years of professional study. Admission to pharmacy programs is limited and competitive. Applicants need to have high grades and a strong background in biology, chemistry, physics, and math. In Illinois, the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree is offered at Midwestern University and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville expects to enroll its first pharmacy

class in the fall of 2005, with an anticipated class size of 75 students.

■ **Related Educational Programs**

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/> You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.

[Pharmacy](#)

[Pharmacy Administration](#)

[Pre-Pharmacy](#)

■ **Credentials**

Pharmacists must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation. Licensing requirements include graduation from an accredited college of pharmacy, and passage of the Board of Pharmacy exam.

■ **Advanced Training**

Graduate programs for the MS and PhD degrees are available in medicinal and pharmaceutical chemistry, pharmaceuticals, pharmacognosy, administrative pharmacy, pharmacology, toxicology, and pharmacokinetics.

■ **Resources**

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

1426 Prince Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703.739.2330

<http://www.aacp.org>

Click on "For Students & Applicants" in the left side bar. Select "Is Pharmacy for You?"

Various awards are available to pharmacy students to encourage research.

American Pharmaceutical Association

2215 Constitution Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20037-2985

Phone: 202.628.4410

<http://www.aphanet.org>

The APhA Foundation provides four \$1,000 scholarships to pharmacy students who have completed one year of course work, earned a 2.75 GPA, and are members of the Academy of Students of Pharmacy.