



TECH IN FOCUS



Andrea Nelson, CPhT | Nebraska Cancer Specialists

Name: **Andrea Nelson, CPhT**

Practice: Nebraska Cancer Specialists

Title/Role: Pharmacy Technician

1) How did you hear about NCODA's Oncology Pharmacy Technician Association (OPTA)?

I learned about OPTA at my first NCODA Fall Summit 4 years ago.

2) How can OPTA or NCODA help you and your practice?

Networking is a huge help for me. Being able to ask questions to peers in "our same boat" is great. The NCODA website is full of information for everyone. If you can't find something there is always a resource available for help!

3) What type of pharmacy does your practice contain (i.e. Medically Integrated Pharmacy, Retail, etc.)?

Medically Integrated Pharmacy. More specifically, only oral oncolytics and supportive medications. We do have technicians in all of our clinics handling all of our IV/infusion medications, but the NCS Outpatient Pharmacy is separate.

4) Explain your current role at your practice.

Jack of all trades! I handle any and all technician tasks. I am the only technician in our pharmacy. I can be filling prescriptions, signing patients up for free drugs, assisting the pharmacists, ordering & counting inventory, to being our company's expert on our courier & shipping sites. I like to be organized! If I have my bearings, I can help everyone else and keep our pharmacy running well.

5) What do you enjoy most about your current position?

I love anything with patient care. If there is something I can do to make someone's day just a little easier I want to help.

6) What do your day-to-day responsibilities include?

- I start each day by checking our delivery calendar and getting prescriptions ready for the morning courier
- Process any refills that need done
- Receive our daily order and update inventory to our processing system
- Answer emails and calls
- Check the status of all our free drug applications and check for open grant funding.
- Prepare any prescriptions for shipment, whether it be via our courier to the patients home or USPS/FedEx.
- Assist the pharmacists with any tasks
- Filing and spreadsheet updating
- Make sure everything is ready for the next day
- Place the order for the day
- Keep the pharmacy organized and running smoothly.

7) Do you assume any specialized duties/responsibilities from time-to-time?

We really work as a team in our pharmacy. Usually, anything one person is working on, we have all helped or played a role in completing the task in some way.

8) Do you have any “best-practices” that you use at your practice that you would like to share with other OPTA members?

We try to make all processes as painless as possible for each patient. If our pharmacy staff is on the same page and have great communication that is easily attainable. Make a daily list of priorities. It's easier to get things done. Lastly, treat yourself well. This job can be exhausting. I found, if I feel good personally and professionally, I can provide exceptional care to my patients.

9) Are there any areas where you / your pharmacy can improve (i.e. patient education, improved process workflow, etc.)?

Our outpatient pharmacy has grown considerably in the last two years. We used to be one pharmacist and one technician. We are currently at 3 pharmacist's and one technician. As we grow our workflow changes constantly. I am all about learning other practices workflow to help make everything easier for everyone involved.

10) What advice do you have for any technicians who are new to the oncology/hematology field?

Take the leap! I only had one year of oncology experience before transferring to the oncology technician field and it was a game changer. I never knew I could be incredibly passionate about a career as I am today. I cannot wait to learn and grow.