



Course Syllabus

Certified Pharmacy Benefits Specialist™

Instructor Information

Name: Tyrone Squires, MBA, CPBS
Office: 19 Clifford Street, Suite 800, Detroit, MI 48226
Telephone: 775-432-6262 (I have voice mail on this line)
Email: maricor.bonjoc@acobs.org
tyrone.squires@acobs.org

Office Hours: Maricor is available to help and is normally online and available at short notice. Please send an email with any questions or to arrange a meeting. If Maricor doesn't respond to an email within 24 hours (M-F) ring her office phone at 702-389-1159.

Meeting Time:	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
	Th	6:00 – 7:30 PM EST	Online via GoToTraining (Virtual)
	TBD	TBD	Summit (In-Person)

The meeting day/time above is dependent on which class format you choose to enroll; virtual or the in-person workshop.

Prerequisites: Minimum two years working experience in employee benefits, health insurance, pharmacy related business or undergraduate degree in business from an accredited university.

Course Description: The Pharmacy Benefit Institute of America is excited to offer its Certified Pharmacy Benefits Specialist™ online program of training. This educational offering includes knowledge that is critical to effective management of the pharmacy benefit. Each unit concludes with a knowledge assessment test to help gauge student comprehension. Students are required to pass with a score of 85% or better in order to qualify for the CPBS designation. Each live session is recorded for on-demand viewing.

eBook information: The eBook will be available 24 hours before the class begins. Please note that access to the eBook is restricted to the training period, and it can only be downloaded for a fee of \$100.

1. Certified Pharmacy Benefits Specialist Training Guide: *CMS Study of the Pharmaceutical Benefit Management Industry*, HCFA Contract No. 500-97-0399/0097, Federal Project Officer: Dr. Peri Iz, June 2001 [updated 2024]

Methods of instruction: The instructor will use a Flipped Classroom, which is an instructional strategy and a type of blended learning that reverses the traditional learning environment by delivering instructional content, often online, outside of the classroom. It moves activities, including those that

may have traditionally been considered homework, into the classroom. In a flipped classroom, students watch online lectures, collaborate in online discussions, or carry out research at home and engage in concepts in the classroom with the guidance of an instructor. A variety of methods are employed to engage students with the course content, including but not limited to reading, discussion, lecture, experiential learning, session recordings and/or research. This course is designed to incite student curiosity about the subject matter and provide practical understanding of more technical pharmacy benefit management concepts than were studied in general employee benefits certification programs.

Learning Objectives

This is an intermediate to expert level course designed to cover relatively complex topics of pharmacy benefit management in order to provide the student with adequate foundational knowledge required for higher-level evaluation of RFPs, contracts, and overall PBM performance with emphasis on cost effectiveness. To that end, the following specific learning objectives will be achieved.

(Week 1): Introduction to Pharmacy Benefit Management

- Outline pharmacy benefit management (PBM) business operations and objectives.
- Identify the services that PBMs provide and discuss why they are needed.
- Explain the PBM revenue model.
- Provide brief history of PBMs and their evolution.

(Week 2): Fundamentals of PBM Pricing

- Describe the key pricing terms and their applications.
- Explain the pharmaceutical reimbursement and supply chain.
- Discuss pharmacy benefit management trend components.
- List PBM hidden cash flow streams.
- Establish internal benchmarks.

(Week 3): Benefit Design for the Pharmacy Benefit

- Identify utilization management tools for designing a clinically appropriate and cost-effective plan.
- Describe how plan sponsors typically structure and manage cost-sharing.
- Discuss cost, access, and patient preference in mail and retail network pharmacy channels.
- Describe effective and clinically appropriate formulary management practices.
- Design a cost-effective plan which optimizes healthcare outcomes while eliminating waste.

(Week 4): Cost-Containment Strategies for the Pharmacy Benefit

- Define and explain why cost containment is important.
- Identify the main components of PBM revenue and how they are used in reimbursement to the dispensing pharmacies
- List the features and describe the effects of various cost containment tools.
- Discuss how health plan enrollees respond to cost containment strategies.
- Formulate payer strategies to achieve lowest net cost for PBM services.

(Week 5): PBM Contracts

- Describe the elements of PBM contracts with pharmacies, manufacturers, and plan sponsors
- Discuss key stakeholders and contractual arrangements between pharmacies, manufacturers, pharmacy benefit managers, plan sponsors, and members.
- List important considerations of a pharmacy benefit management contract.
- Discuss important contracting considerations for plan sponsors.
- Design best practices for PBM contract pricing.

(Week 6): PBM Procurement

- Identify savings opportunities by developing visibility into the direct and indirect drug spend.
- Expand awareness of the importance of PBM procurement and its influence on the bottom line.
- Facilitate sourcing performance, reduce maverick spend, increase compliance and generate savings.
- Explain the features and benefits of Request for Proposals (RFPs) and Reverse Auctions.
- Explain the pros and cons of the various pricing arrangements: spread, pass-through and fiduciary.

(Week 7): Specialty Pharmacy Benefits Management

- Explain how specialty drugs are priced for contracting purposes.
- Describe the different specialty drug disease states and how they may affect plan goals.
- List pathways to specialty access.
- Map how drug benefit design applies to specialty drugs
- Discuss key differences in the administration of specialty drugs under the pharmacy and medical benefits.
- Explain differences in utilization and cost by site of care and how plans influence use of various channels.
- Discuss and put into play best practices for optimal specialty utilization.
- Identify manufacturer strategies to increase patient utilization.
- Examine specialty distribution channels and clinical management of specialty drugs.

Grading:

1. A course calendar and a full schedule of deliverables, including point values, is provided at enrollment. Your total score comes from three components: quizzes, a capstone project, and the final exam.
2. Late assignments will not be accepted. Feedback and solution guidance will be generated during assignment work sessions. Supplemental feedback may be provided via email by the instructor. Feedback and guidance will be available for assignments worked and submitted late, but the score earned will be a zero.
3. Students failing to adhere to testing policies documented herein will earn a zero for the missed examination.
4. The Grading System is pass or fail. A cumulative point total of 437 and a minimum score of 85% on the final exam is required to achieve certification.

Points	Letter Grade
437-515	Pass
436 or less	Fail

Course Schedule:

1. The course calendar and schedule of deliverables (with point values) specific to your section is appended to this document.
2. Readings should be completed before the class meeting on the date indicated in the schedule below. Unless otherwise noted, each reading is from the training guide. From time to time, additional supplementary readings may be assigned. Supplementary reading assignments will be clearly posted on our GoToTraining course site.
3. In general, the course will follow the following outline:

Session	Date	Topic	Chapter
Unit 1: Conceptual Foundations			
1	Week 1	Intro to Pharmacy Benefit Management	1 & 2
2	Week 2	Fundamentals of PBM Pricing	2
Unit 2: Formulary Management, Cost-Containment and Plan Design Strategies			
3	Week 3	Plan Design for the Pharmacy Benefit	5
4	Week 4	Cost-Containment Strategies for the Pharmacy Benefit	3
Unit 3: Special Topics in Pharmacy Benefit Management			
5	Week 5	PBM Contracts	3
6	Week 6	PBM Procurement	3 & 4
7	Week 7	Specialty Pharmacy Benefits Management	6
8	Week 8	Final Examination	

Testing Policies:

1. Exams are CLOSED BOOK, CLOSED NOTE. Be advised if you are seeking continuing education credit, some states require that you pass the exam to be granted continuing education credit.
2. Quizzes are OPEN BOOK, OPEN NOTE. The answer keys for quizzes and practice exams are provided immediately upon submission of all quizzes for study purposes.

3. The final exam is administered remotely at 6 PM ET. Students arriving late forfeit that portion of exam/quiz time. No extra time will be provided for a student's late arrival. Each student will have 60 minutes to complete the final examination.

4. Candidates must achieve a minimum score of 85% to earn certification. Two examination attempts are included with initial enrollment and the highest score earned is recorded. Candidates who do not achieve a passing score after the two included attempts may enroll in any subsequent cohort for a \$200 examination fee. Enrollment provides access to the full program, including all course materials and instruction, through the cohort's final examination. The examination fee includes up to two exam attempts for that cohort. Candidates may continue to enroll in future cohorts until they achieve a passing score.

Extra credit: Students should not expect extra credit to be available. There is a course buffer (10 points) already applied for each student to use when "life happens" and for whatever reason.

Assignments/Projects: Assignments, projects and homework are documented in detail on the schedule of assignments. Any late assignment including quizzes will receive a score of zero.

Group Tasks: Where group work is assigned, assignment requirements and grading rubrics will be provided in detail on the course RingCentral site. Students should expect that a portion of their individual grade on a group project will be based upon their individual contribution as assessed by their teammates.

Attendance:

1. In order to facilitate compliance with reporting rules surrounding continuing education, attendance is taken during each class session. Students are responsible for signing the attendance roster to signify their presence in class. Poll questions are used to take attendance for eLearning; by not answering a poll question a student is considered absent. As requested by various departments of insurance, the student's last date of attendance will be reported.

2. Students are expected to attend this course regularly. This policy recognizes that course content includes classroom lecture and discussion, certain aspects of which may not be covered on examinations and other written assignments. Class attendance helps you acquire knowledge and clarification.

Classroom behavior:

1. We are all responsible for the environment of our classroom. As such, it is imperative that we respect each other and strive to provide a climate that supports academic engagement and learning. That doesn't mean we won't have fun. It does mean we will be kind and supportive of each other.

2. This is a technical class and may be very difficult for your peers, even though it may be very easy for you. Disruptions such as late arrivals, early departures, using a cell phone, laptop or tablet for non-class purposes, side-bar conversations during lecture, use of disrespectful language, and similar behaviors should be kept to a minimum.

3. If a student's behavior becomes distracting to another, the offending student should expect to be advised as such. The offending student should immediately adjust their behavior to accepted respectful norms.

System requirements for online success: Since this course is offered in an online format, students should expect some volume of work assigned to require connectivity to online resources. As such, students should ensure that their computer system meets these minimum technology requirements.

Minimum System Requirements

- Required Operating System: Minimum Windows 10 or latest Mac OS with 32 MB RAM
- Supported Internet browsers: Chrome and Mozilla Firefox
- Browser preferences: Java/JavaScript and Cookies
- Screen Resolution requirements: 800x600 minimum
- Additional requirements may be specified by the instructor based on the technology used

Additionally, we suggest these measures for our students especially before taking quizzes or exams:

1. Make sure there is no Windows update pending on the computer.
2. Make sure that Chrome or Mozilla Firefox browsers are updated as well.
3. Make sure that Java is updated on your computer.

Test your connection (link is in the reminder emails you receive from GoToTraining) prior to joining the class. If you have any issues with connecting to a training, contact GoToTraining at 877-548-3003 (option 1). If you are taking a quiz and are unable to successfully submit it and you've addressed all points above, try clearing your cache. If you still are having issues after addressing all four points, contact Maricor Bonjoc at maricor.bonjoc@acobs.org for assistance.

Skills for online success: Because this course is offered in an online format, students should expect some volume of work assigned to require skills with online resources. As such, students should have developed these fundamental skills to be successful.

Fundamental Required Skills:

- Download and send files.
- Navigate the Internet.
- Download software updates.
- Operating system basic troubleshooting
- Participate in chats and threaded discussions.
- Familiarity with messaging platforms (Skype, Hangout, LinkedIn etc.)
- Working knowledge of (word processing, spreadsheets, course specific software)

General Policies

Policy on Withdrawal: For the 8-week online Certified Pharmacy Benefits Specialist course, a refund of the course fee (less \$100 for the eBook training guide) is afforded to all registered students up to 7 days

upon the start of the enrolled course. If for any reason it's not right for you, up to 7 days upon start of the course, just tell us and receive a refund (less \$100 for the eBook training guide) of your course fee. On the 7th day, upon the start of the course, there are no refunds issued. If a course started on May 1, students would have through May 6 to receive a refund of their course fee (less \$100 for the eBook training guide). On May 7, there would be no refund, for example. The eBook or training guide is made available for download 24 hours before the first class begins. For those groups who have registered for the in-person Knowledge Camp workshop, a 75% refund is afforded when canceling at least 45 days BEFORE the pre-training workshop begins. If canceling 44 days or less before the pre-training workshop begins there are NO REFUNDS.

Religious Observance Policy: Because of the extraordinary variety of religious affiliations represented, the course calendar makes no provision for religious holidays. It is our policy, however, to respect the faith and religious obligations of the individual. Students who find that their classes or examinations involve conflicts with their religious observances are expected to notify their instructors well in advance so that alternative arrangements as suitable as possible may be worked out.

Academic dishonesty: All acts of academic dishonesty including cheating and plagiarism will be viewed as violations of appropriate student conduct and they will be dealt with following student due process policies in effect. Disciplinary actions will be taken as warranted. An act of academic dishonesty in this course will automatically result in a grade of Fail on the test or assignment at issue, and possibly for the course itself. Please, give credit where credit is due, specifically and consistently. The appropriate use of technology is expected.

Accreditation Information:

In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by the [American College of Benefit Specialists](#).



The use of this seal confirms that this activity has met HR Certification Institute's® (HRCI®) criteria for recertification credit pre-approval.



PBIA is recognized by SHRM to offer Professional Development Credits (PDCs) for SHRM-CP® or SHRM-SCP® recertification activities. This program is valid for 12 PDCs. For more information about certification or recertification, please visit www.shrmcertification.org.



Life and Health (L&H) licensees may earn continuing education credits check with the department of insurance or email info@pharmacybenefitinstitute.com to determine if we're an approved provider (and reporting requirements) of L&H continuing education in your state.

Tips for Course Success:

1. Reset your thinking. It's not about "surviving this class." Success with the material covered herein will develop knowledge and skills that you will rely upon for many years into the future.
2. Take notes, stay glued to the screen and lecture. Stay current. Catching up is difficult in any academic environment.
3. Read the eBook and work the pre-lecture assignment before class.
4. Work the post-lecture assignment and homework online shortly after lecture.
 - a. Re-study the topics covered by any questions you may have missed on the post-lecture assignment.
 - b. Work the homework online and use the supporting study resources provided to solve the problems correctly. Allocate sufficient time in your schedule to earn 100% on assignments.
5. Watch the recordings multiple times.
6. Take all of the test prep practice exams.
7. Seek out study and/or academic skills assistance from your instructor and the wide variety of resources available both online and offline. When all else fails, Google it!
8. Use the final exam study guide to help you prepare.
9. **When taking quizzes and exams do not use the arrow keys on your keyboard.** This might cause the software to interpret this as an attempt to change the answer to a question you had no intent on changing. Additionally, a mouse click outside of an area you are typing an answer could also cause the software to interpret this an attempt to change an answer. The software is sensitive so be careful in how/when you use the mouse and arrow keys.