

# THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY

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## PREREQUISITE LEGISLATION.

*A Statement Prepared by the Joint Committee on Prerequisite Legislation of the National Association Boards of Pharmacy, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy and the American Pharmaceutical Association.*

### I. INTRODUCTORY.

The dictionary informs us that "prerequisite" means "something previously required or necessary for an end proposed." In pharmacy the term represents a more or less definite preliminary and professional education required of the candidate for the pharmacist's license. In this sense, the meaning of "prerequisite" is two-fold; it includes not only the professional education in a college of pharmacy but also the high school preparation which necessarily precedes it.

### II. HISTORY AND PRESENT STATUS.

While the subject of requiring college graduation has been under discussion for many years, it has been only during the last twenty-five years that sentiment crystallized to such an extent as to bring about the enactment of "prerequisite" laws. The first law of the kind went into effect in New York in 1905 and its operation was watched with the greatest interest by the pharmaceutical profession of the country. Pennsylvania followed soon after; then Rhode Island fell into line and, then, North Dakota and Ohio joined the ranks of "Prerequisite States."

The beneficial effects of prerequisite laws in these states were so apparent that prerequisite legislation spread very rapidly and to-day 36 states and the District of Columbia have prerequisite laws or have secured the same effect by Board of Pharmacy rulings. The territory of Porto Rico and the Republic of Cuba also have prerequisite laws. Only the following states do not yet have prerequisite laws: Arizona, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Wyoming.

Prerequisite legislation is now far beyond the experimental stage and has proved its worth in every case. Those who feared that such legislation, if enacted in their states, would bring about undesirable conditions have learned by experience that their fears were unfounded. If the pharmacists of any state were dissatisfied with the results of prerequisite legislation they would be expected to express this sentiment and to endeavor to repeal the legislation. With a majority of the states operating under prerequisite legislation for several years, all efforts to modify the laws have been in the direction of strengthening them rather than toward repeal.

It is worthy of note that where a referendum vote of the pharmacists of the state has been taken to secure an expression on prerequisite legislation, the result has been overwhelmingly favorable. In the Illinois referendum on the "Prerequisite" in 1912, the vote stood 965 for to 247 against. A referendum vote in Michi-

gan gave the same proportion, while a vote in Minnesota on the same issue gave a result of over eighty per cent of the votes in favor of the "Prerequisite."

Frequently the mistake has been made of including in one bill several amendments to the state's pharmacy law, each amendment having a different object and each entailing a certain amount of opposition; the opponents of these various amendments were thus able to combine and defeat the bill. Prerequisite amendments should be introduced as such, considered independently and accepted or rejected on their merits.

In some states, a number of pharmacists have opposed prerequisite legislation, some because the real purpose and importance of the legislation has not been fully explained to them and others because they feared an advance in the salary of drug clerks or that poor boys who could not afford the required high school and college education would be prevented from entering the profession of pharmacy. Experience in prerequisite states has shown that the benefits far outweigh the detriments, and based on this experience there is presented a statement of the arguments for and against prerequisite legislation with the hope that they will be given careful study by pharmacists, particularly in those states which have not as yet passed such laws.

It is recognized as important that legislation regulating the entry into and practice of pharmacy in the several states should be as nearly uniform as conditions will make advisable and this joint committee representing the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy and the American Pharmaceutical Association urges that the enactment of prerequisite legislation in every state of the Union is now the most important step in this direction.

### III. ARGUMENTS FOR PREREQUISITE LEGISLATION.

1.—The strongest argument for prerequisite legislation is that the public welfare demands it. Who would think of employing a physician who is not a college graduate? Yet the knowledge and skill of the trained physician may be nullified by entrusting his prescriptions to an ill-trained pharmacist. The laity are sufficiently informed regarding these dangers but the impression is general that when the state certifies to the training of the pharmacist by granting him a license, he, of course, must be a college-trained man. It is no answer to these arguments to say that self-prepared applicants must pass the same examination as the college men. We know that this does not imply equal proficiency. One has been prepared for life, the other in many instances for the examination merely. Education and practical experience are both necessary to make a capable and well-equipped pharmacist. One is no more necessary than the other. Pharmacy laws everywhere require practical experience. It is certainly as important to insist just as strongly on college training. Laws are for the benefit of the people and their welfare should be the first consideration.

2.—It is better for the pharmacist himself that he be a college graduate; in fact it is an injustice to the young man entering pharmacy not to require it. Both physicians and patrons will have more confidence in the college-trained man; he will have more confidence in himself. He will have a better appreciation of the value of accuracy and of the importance of seemingly small things. He will be better able to judge between a good medicine and a poor one. He will be capable

of determining the strength and purity of the medicines which he handles. He will understand the importance of having his preparations come up to the standard requirements and will know how to keep them from deteriorating.

3.—The study of pharmacy from a functional standpoint under the Commonwealth Fund and conducted by Dr. Charters and his able committee has proven conclusively that *Pharmacy is a profession* and that those who enter it should have a collegiate training. The men who made this study did not accept the opinion of the college professors nor of the retail pharmacists but made a careful study of the *actual* operation of the retail pharmacy and determined from these the training needed to efficiently perform these duties. Thousands of drug stores were studied to determine the knowledge necessary to efficiently compound prescriptions, to intelligently supply the needs of the customers and to cooperate with other health agencies in the all important business of promoting public health.

A study of this voluminous and searching report will convince any "Doubting Thomas" that prerequisite legislation is necessary for the protection of public health. A study of the report is issued under the title "Basic Material for a Pharmaceutical Curriculum" and can be secured from the McGraw-Hill Book Company of New York City. If there still be any retail pharmacists who seriously question the wisdom of prerequisite legislation, they owe it to themselves and to their profession to carefully study this report.

4.—The general establishment of the prerequisite of college training would add greatly to the professional standing of pharmacists. We all recognize the desirability of legislation that shall restrict the sale of drugs to those whose education and experience fit them for this responsibility. But it will be impossible to secure such legislation until we can demonstrate that the pharmacist is really an educated man. The only means of combating the dispensing evil is through the better training of pharmacists themselves. When pharmacists can show that they are trained specialists then they can successfully demand that compounding and dispensing be made their exclusive privilege.

5.—The prerequisite results in bringing into pharmacy a better educated and more desirable class of young men and women who are attracted by its professional character. It can scarcely be expected that high school graduates will enter a calling where they must start on the same footing as boys from the grades. They will naturally give preference to a vocation where their high school education counts for something.

6.—The present and future advancement of pharmacy requires a better professional preparation. The sciences underlying pharmacy, notably chemistry, physics, botany and physiology have developed with wonderful rapidity during the last decade. Medicine has also made great forward strides. Pharmacy must keep pace, or lose entirely its identity and its professional status.

7.—Prerequisite legislation is bound to come. It is now established in 35 states and the District of Columbia. Nowhere has any serious effort been made to repeal a prerequisite law. Pharmacists in other states are awakening to the fact that public sentiment will eventually demand such laws. Is it not better that pharmacists themselves should initiate laws affecting pharmacy rather than to leave this to outsiders? Let pharmacists have the honor of bringing about the new and better conditions.

## IV. ARGUMENTS AGAINST PREREQUISITE LEGISLATION ANSWERED.

Answering now the arguments that have been advanced against the Prerequisite at various times; these are, in general:

1. *That the Prerequisite Would Impose a Hardship on Those Who Have Already Entered Pharmacy and Have Spent Some Years in Learning It.*—This argument is based on a misconception. All prerequisite laws have allowed a reasonable time for those already in pharmacy to qualify and in most instances this allowance has been exceptionally liberal.

2. *That It Would Greatly Increase the Wages of Drug Clerks.*—The operation of the Prerequisite Laws in these 35 states has not borne out this contention. There has been some increase in wages, comparable to the general increase in living cost, but this has not been proportionately more in New York with a prerequisite law than in Massachusetts without one.

3. *That It Would Subordinate the Boards of Pharmacy to the Colleges.*—Some opponents of the "Prerequisite" have made much fuss about the fearful results of turning over the Boards of Pharmacy to the colleges. Where prerequisite laws are in effect the Boards actually control the schools and check upon their work.

4. *That It Would Keep the "Poor Boy" Out of Pharmacy.*—At the present time when the opportunities for education are so numerous, there is no excuse for a poor boy being kept out, if he is made of the right sort of stuff. Not only are scholarships offered in several schools, but in practically all schools and, especially, those in the large cities; there are many opportunities for employment and self-support. Young men of reasonable "grit" and good health need not be kept from attending a school of pharmacy through lack of money.

5. *That College Courses Are Too Theoretical.*—If this is true the objector has in mind the wrong kind of college. Here is where the Boards of Pharmacy could exercise supervision. Laboratory instruction of the most practical kind has been greatly increased during recent years and college courses in pharmacy are better than ever before. Prerequisite laws do not repeal the requirement of practical experience but supplement it.

6. *That in Country Towns and Thinly-Settled Districts Professional Knowledge and Skill Are Seldom Required.*—True, possibly, but human life is as valuable in the country as in the city and the dangers of error just as great. Small communities are entitled to safe and efficient pharmaceutical service as much as are populous centers.

7. *That While "Prerequisite Legislation" Is Coming—the Time Is Not Yet Ripe for It in This State or Section.*—The experience of 35 states and the District of Columbia indicates that the pharmaceutical prerequisite is valuable alike to the public and to the pharmacist. Other medical branches are making rapid advances and in order to render the pharmaceutical service which such advances make necessary, pharmacy must keep pace and do so promptly. There is much discussion of the future of pharmacy and the question will be determined by the ability of the future pharmacist to give the professional service expected of him which in turn depends largely upon his education and practical training. It is essential that he have the best training possible and the time is ripe for "Prerequisite Legislation."

## V. SUMMARY.

1.—Prerequisite legislation has had a fair test. It has been in operation in New York for twenty-three years and in other states for shorter periods. No serious efforts have been made to repeal these laws or regulations. The results have been satisfactory to the public and the pharmacists of those states. There has been no shortage of clerks nor have clerks' wages been unduly advanced. Entrance requirements to the colleges have been increased with the result that a better educated class of young men are entering pharmacy.

2.—Public welfare demands that the pharmacist be well trained. This training is not unduly expensive. Ambitious and energetic young men may be partly self-supporting while attending the schools of pharmacy. Quiz courses and courses by mail do not give the right training. Self-trained men are unlikely to be well trained.

3.—The present and future welfare of pharmacy demand better preparation both preliminary and professional on the part of the young men entering its ranks. The underlying sciences and the related medical branches are developing rapidly. Pharmacy must keep up or lose caste altogether.

4.—Prerequisite legislation has come in most states. It is better that pharmacists should direct it and adjust it to their conditions rather than to have it framed by outsiders. Properly drawn "Prerequisite Laws" will work no hardship on anyone.



Home of Joseph Priestley and grave at Northumberland, Pa.

Joseph Priestley died at Northumberland February 6, 1804. The American Chemical Society was organized after a visit to Priestley's grave; a large number of those in attendance were pharmacists, members of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

## DRUGGISTS' RESEARCH BUREAU.

*Bulletin No. 6* of the Druggists' Research Bureau presents the results of the first nationwide census ever made of toilet stocks carried by retail druggists. Tables show the typical or usual number of brands of toilet goods carried, the varied assortments in the lines listed, the sizes and styles. Other tabulations are based on the ratio and proportions of the items carried in stores doing a varying amount of business, and in cities of different populations.

The Druggists' Research Bureau has established a direct mailing list for its research publications; retail druggists may have their names placed upon this list by the payment of \$2.00—the office is 51 Maiden Lane, New York City:

Courtesy of George Decker, New York