



## Samantha Burgess

Dispensary Manager

Life Pharmacy Coastlands

NZ Primary Healthcare Awards

Community Pharmacy Technician of the Year

### **Why did you become a Pharmacy Technician?**

My Mum has worked as a business manager in pharmacy for my whole life, so I'd always been around pharmacy growing up. I've worked in pharmacy since I was 16 and when I moved to New Zealand I worked on the counter for a year. I was then approached by the Dispensary Manager to become a pharmacy technician.

There are plenty of career opportunities open to you as a pharmacy technician, which reached a pinnacle for me this year when I won the 2020 New Zealand Primary Healthcare Awards Community Pharmacy Technician of the Year.

### **What do you enjoy most about your role?**

I'm the Dispensary Manager of the third largest dispensary owned by Green Cross Health, who have 365 stores across New Zealand. I love working with my patients in the community and being able to offer care and advice to them. I enjoy having a well-run dispensary and being responsible for a happy hardworking team of technicians, pharmacists, and interns.

### **Why is your role important to your workplace and the wider healthcare system?**

We work right next door to Team Medical, the Accident and Emergency medical centre for the Kapiti Coast, so we are a very busy pharmacy. We are open 363 days of the year, so we are a very important part of the community and the healthcare system.

As Dispensary Manager, I have a team of 12, including 5 technicians, 4.5 pharmacists and 2 interns and my role is to oversee the running of the dispensary. A huge part of my Dispensary Manager role is to be a mentor and provide leadership and guidance for the team and especially to the technicians in my team.

I am also the only Pharmacy Accuracy Checking Technician at our pharmacy. That means I am responsible for completing the final safety check of prescriptions before they are provided to patients when checking.

### **What did you find particularly challenging or rewarding about working on the frontline of the health system during the COVID-19 lockdown?**

My team worked incredibly hard during that time. Our workload increased by about 40% during the COVID-19 lockdown. Our motto was "just keep swimming." As soon as anyone said that we knew they were feeling under pressure, but it helped us get through it together.

### **What does Pharmacy Technician Day mean to you?**

I see Pharmacy Technician Day as a real celebration of what we do. We are the backbone of the dispensary in the pharmacy. We are an integral part of the healthcare system. A pharmacy technician is to a pharmacist, what a nurse is to a doctor.



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