

Standards of Practice for Saskatchewan Pharmacists

INTRODUCTION

Standards of practice are essential for any profession. Standards provide a means of assessing the individual pharmacist's practice against a minimum level of expected performance. This document applies to pharmacies licensed as community pharmacies, while the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists' Standards of Practice apply to pharmacies licensed as hospital pharmacies. Pharmacists should also refer to the Standards of Practice for Pharmacy Services to Special Care Homes for supplementary standards specific to this practice setting.

Standards of Practice provide the following benefits:

- Ensure the provision of quality pharmaceutical services to the public, and ensure that the health and safety of the public be the first consideration in the practice of the profession.
- Provide a method for pharmacists to self-assess their practices.
- Provide the basis for promoting the pharmacist's role so the public can learn what to expect and legitimately demand in the way of professional services.
- Enable pharmacists to define the scope of pharmacy practice to other health care professionals and to identify the pharmacist's responsibilities in relation to the roles of their colleagues.
- Enable licensing bodies to use them to review the appropriateness of their licensing requirements.
- Enable licensing bodies to use them in their disciplinary and peer review processes to evaluate competency and proper professional performance.
- Enable providers of continuing education to more accurately identify practitioner needs and design programs around uniformly acceptable objectives.
- Enable the College of Pharmacy to scrutinize its curriculum to determine the relevancy of subject matter in its education programs.
- Enable the profession to inform government and other official agencies dealing with health care matters exactly what constitutes comprehensive pharmacy services.
- Enable third party payors to better understand the services for which they should be paying.

In these Standards:

- "pharmacist" means a licensed pharmacist
- "apprentice" means a registered apprentice

- “assistant” means a person who is not a pharmacist or apprentice, and who is employed in a pharmacy to assist the pharmacist in performing functions as described herein.

The pharmacist’s accountability to society, to his peers and to other health professionals relates to his competence in discharging specific professional responsibilities.

THE ROLE OF THE PHARMACIST

The contemporary role of the pharmacist is defined as drug use control. To fulfill this role, the pharmacist must perform three major functions.

Control Function

Ensuring prescription drugs and non-prescription drugs are correctly stored and distributed to minimize drug misuse and drug abuse. This function includes the pharmacist’s traditional activities of compounding and dispensing which ensures the provision of the correct drug. However, it also requires that appropriate non-prescribed drug(s) be provided for the condition(s) being treated.

Education Function

Ensuring the patient gets maximum benefit from prescription and non-prescription drugs by providing the appropriate information for the patient to understand the use, precautions, common side effects, and storage requirements of the medication.

Consultant Function

Providing information on drug products and therapy to the physician and other members of the health care team.

PROFESSIONAL FUNCTIONS

The pharmacist shall subscribe to the Code of Ethics. This includes adhering to and functioning within all relevant federal and provincial statutes.

The pharmacist is expected to consult professional reference materials when required in professional decision-making.

The pharmacist may refuse to provide professional services, if, in his/her professional judgment, it is in the best interest of the patient to refuse such service.

In providing professional services, the **following functions must be performed by a pharmacist** who shall:

- Receive verbal prescription orders and verbal authorization for refills directly from the prescriber.
- Determine that:
 - the prescription is a legal, valid and rational order;

- the dosage of the medication is correct; and
- the patient is conforming to the proper drug regimen as directed by the prescriber.
- Determine the product to be dispensed.
- Consult the patient's medication profile to:
 - confirm there are no contraindications or allergies to the prescribed drug;
 - confirm there are no incompatibilities with the prescribed drug and other prescription or non-prescription drugs the patient may be taking, or foods;
 - confirm there are no incompatibilities with the prescribed drug and disease states or medical conditions; and
 - determine the patient's utilization pattern.
- Personally check:
 - the labelled container from which the medication is removed;
 - the contents of the prescription container and the appearance of the total product to confirm its accuracy and ensure that the product is pharmaceutically elegant; and
 - transcription of prescription data to the patient medication profile.
- Communicate with the patient to ensure the medication information needs of the patient are met. Where appropriate, the pharmacist should refer to:
 - what the medication is, what it does, and how to take it properly;
 - any unusual storage requirements;
 - the avoidance of some foods, and certain prescription or non-prescription drugs, to prevent significant interactions;
 - advice concerning important side-effects;
 - refill procedures; and
 - any other information which, in the judgement of the pharmacist, the patient needs to maximize the benefits of therapy.

This communication should be performed in a manner that respects the patient's right of confidentiality.

- Take full responsibility for the proper recording of all prescriptions, Narcotic and Controlled Drugs, and Poisons, as required by the pertinent legislation.
- Report any known or suspected Drug Adverse Reaction or Event. Vigilance to the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists office, which in turn, will forward the reports to the appropriate bodies.
- Develop and maintain professional rapport with the prescriber and be able to effectively communicate when required to:
 - verify the prescription for accuracy and completeness;
 - clarify any uncertainties in the prescription;
 - advise of the patient's utilization pattern of the prescribed drug; and
 - provide drug information.

- Ensure the accuracy of all drug information systems and programs employed in the pharmacy.
- Handle requests for no-public access non-prescription drugs.
- Promote rational drug use and employ appropriate measures to prevent drug abuse and misuse.

The pharmacist is responsible for, and must supervise the following functions which may be delegated to an assistant:

- accept written prescriptions or refill requests from the patient or patient's agent;
- take the medication from the shelf to the work area;
- count and/or pour medication;
- type prescription labels;
- select type of prescription container;
- attach labels to the prescription container;
- pre-package pharmaceuticals;
- prepare extemporaneous compounds;
- prepare bulk manufactured products;
- replenish stock bottles;
- maintain storage facilities;
- control inventory;
- prepare receipts and claim forms;
- transcribe prescription data to patient medication profiles (manual or electronic), which is to be checked and initialed by the supervising pharmacist;
- file the prescription as required by law, and pharmacy policy;
- record Narcotic, and Controlled Drug entries as required by law; and
- direct patients to the location of non-prescription medications.

These functions may be performed by an assistant only when under the direct supervision of the pharmacist.

The ratio of pharmacists to assistants working in the dispensing area and performing these functions is limited to a ratio of 1:1. This ratio excludes apprentices.

NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION COUNSELLING

The pharmacist shall be accessible for consultation.

The pharmacist should advise the patient on how, when and whether to take non-prescription medication, and when appropriate, advise the patient to consult a physician or other health care professional.

THE PRESCRIPTION

Copies

Every patient is entitled, upon request, to receive a copy of his prescription from the pharmacist to whom the prescription has been given.

Any prescription copy must be clearly marked with the word “copy”, include the name and address of the pharmacy writing the copy, and indicate the number of times the original prescription may be refilled. The pharmacist must retain the original prescription.

A prescription copy is for information purposes only, and **may not be used to fill a prescription**, unless it is a component of a transfer as described below.

Transfers

A copy does not constitute a transfer. Specific information must be recorded to fulfil the requirement of a transfer in accordance with the Food and Drug Regulations.

Only prescriptions for Schedule F Drugs may be transferred from one pharmacist to another. This means that the entire prescription, including all remaining repeats, is transferred. Transferring a portion of the remaining repeats does not constitute a legal transfer.

The transferred prescription shall include:

- the name and address of the pharmacist transferring the prescription;
- the number of authorized repeats remaining, if any; and
- the date of the last fill or refill.

When a prescription is transferred, the original prescription shall remain on file, and on it shall be entered:

- the date of the transfer;
- an indication on the prescription and the patient profile that no further sales nor transfers may be made under the prescription (i.e. the word ‘Void’).

It is recommended that the “transferor” indicate on the original prescription the name of the pharmacy and the pharmacist to whom the prescription has been transferred, and the “transferor” indicates to the “transferee,” besides the number of repeats remaining, if any, the dates of refills made under the prescription.

It is unethical for a pharmacist to refuse to transfer a prescription for a Schedule F drug, except when such refusal is in the best interest of the patient. In other words, a pharmacist may refuse to transfer a prescription based on sound professional reasons.

Verbal Prescriptions

Only a pharmacist or apprentice under supervision shall be authorized to receive and transcribe verbal prescriptions or refill authority from a licensed prescriber.

Refills

No prescription shall be renewed unless properly authorized by the prescriber and in conformity with the appropriate legislation. Where permitted under the law, authorization for refills must be obtained from the prescriber, whether or not the law requires a prescription for a given medication.

A pharmacist may accept authority to dispense or refill a prescription only from a practitioner who is legally authorized to prescribe such drugs.

Prescription Validity

A prescription is only valid for 12 months from the date it was issued provided that the prescribing physician is attending the patient. This means that a prescription becomes invalid when it exceeds 12 months of age or when the physician ceases to attend the patient for reasons such as, but not limited to, death, retirement, leaving practice.

Patient Medication Profiles

Patient medication profiles are mandatory in Saskatchewan. All profiles, whether manual or electronic, must be maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations.

The pharmacist is responsible for reviewing the patient medication profile during the dispensing process, prior to releasing the prescription to the patient or patient's agent.

Records

Each pharmacy shall establish and maintain appropriate records of all dispensed prescriptions and retain this record for a minimum of two years, as required by federal and provincial legislation.

Prescription records shall be available at all reasonable times for audit or inspection, by persons authorized as such under the law, or by any contractual obligation.

Return of Prescription Medication

A pharmacist shall not accept and return to stock for re-use, any drug or preparation previously dispensed.

Delivery

When a delivery service is provided, the pharmacist shall ensure that the medication is delivered to the person or his/her agent and that, if not already received, the patient or agent receives instructions, either written or verbal, on the proper utilization of the medication including dosage, storage and precautions.

Imprinted Forms

A pharmacist shall not solicit professional consideration by providing, or permitting any person to provide on his behalf, blank prescription forms to prescribers which are imprinted in any manner whatsoever with any reference to a licensed pharmacy or pharmacist.

THE LABEL

Prescription Labels

Labels affixed to a dispensed prescription must contain the minimum information as required under the Bylaws Rules and Regulations. The label should also include:

- the dosage form;
- expiry date (where appropriate); and
- the dispensing pharmacist's name or initials (to provide an audit trail for the dispensing process).

The label shall be of sufficient size to allow all necessary information to be included, in a clear type size large enough for all information to be easily discernable.

Auxiliary Labels

When appropriate, auxiliary labels may be selected by the pharmacist to meet the information needs of the patient concerning the use, storage, precautions or other relevant information pertaining to the particular drug or medication sold or dispensed.

Outer Container

Where, by necessity, a label must be affixed to an outer container, the inner package containing the drug should be suitably identified.

Labels for Re-Packaged Products

Labels to be affixed to containers when products are re-packaged from bulk storage or containers, must contain the following information:

- name of the product;
 - generic name and name (or accepted abbreviation) of manufacturer **OR**
 - brand or trade name;
- strength or concentration;
- dosage form;
- size of package or quantity;
- lot number; and
- expiry date (where applicable).

THE DISPENSARY

Security

While the pharmacy manager is responsible for overall pharmacy security, the pharmacist on duty shall ensure that all drugs in the pharmacy are secure from loss at all times. The pharmacist is also responsible for the custodial care of specific drug products that must be removed from public access.

Professional Control

In accordance with the requirements of The Saskatchewan Pharmacy Act 1996, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, the dispensary shall be under the personal management, supervision and control of a duly licensed pharmacist at all times.

A pharmacist shall not permit an unlicensed person to direct, influence, control or participate in the management or operation of a licensed pharmacy of which he/she is in charge.

Unauthorized Personnel

The dispensary must be secure from entry by unauthorized personnel.

Only persons employed in the pharmacy should be allowed entry to the dispensary areas, and then only with the permission of the pharmacist in charge.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The pharmacist is responsible for:

- maintaining a high level of personal capability and awareness of professional standards;
- utilizing professional resource materials for reference and personal study;
- projecting an image of professionalism through proper dress, grooming and speech;
- participating in continuing education programs;
- retaining membership in professional associations, and attend appropriate conventions, seminars and courses; and
- assisting in training and development of other pharmacists and apprentices as a preceptor.

PROFESSIONAL ADVERTISING

In advertising relating to prescriptions, prescription services, professional services and charges for same, the pharmacist shall observe the pertinent legislation.

DRUG SAMPLES

A pharmacist shall not receive or offer any consideration or payment, monetary or otherwise, direct or indirect, for the receipt of drug samples.

SALE OF OUTDATED PRODUCTS

The pharmacist shall not give, sell, or offer any product for sale in a pharmacy beyond its expiry date or where the product will likely be used or consumed beyond its expiry date. Products of such nature shall be removed from any public or selling area of the pharmacy premises following the expiry of such term or such date.