

THE APOTHECARY

NEWSLETTER
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The official newsletter of the Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board.

Registrants are responsible for reviewing all information within this publication.

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*Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of The Apothecary!
Please read all of the content in this issue. If you have
any questions or comments please email inforx@nlpb.ca.*

MESSAGE FROM THE REGISTRAR

A Strategic Focus

After several years of uncertainty and strain on the healthcare system due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NLPB staff and Board of Directors knew that when it was time to re-evaluate strategic priorities, we would first need a fulsome assessment of the current practice environment. Upon completion of a survey of pharmacy professionals and a series of discussions with some of our colleagues and collaborators, feedback was compiled and analyzed by an external strategic planning facilitator. Consultation with pharmacy professionals and stakeholders was a very valuable tool in the strategic planning process, and over the course of two planning sessions held in late 2022 and early 2023, both staff and board members reviewed the feedback and discussed its impact on our future strategic direction.

Based on the feedback received, NLPB staff and board recognized that it was necessary to refine our vision to more clearly define both NLPB's goal for the future and its role in achieving it. Once the strategic planning process has concluded, this new vision and a revised mission statement will be shared along with the strategic goals that will guide NLPB's path forward over the next few years.

In determining the strategic goals, the staff and board decided on a risk-based approach by identifying the top risks of harm to the public that NLPB is responsible for protecting against and ensuring the strategic goals adequately align with mitigating these risks. In taking this approach, NLPB will be in the best position to ensure that the solutions in place are targeted and efficient in addressing these risks. In addition, this approach will provide clarity as to the reason behind each strategic decision the NLPB board makes.

As the staff and board work to finalize the strategic plan, work towards achieving the goals of the current plan continues. Over the past several months, NLPB has been working collaboratively with the Department of Health and Community Services to finalize updates to the *Authorization to Prescribe Regulations*. Revisions include reducing limitations on prescription extensions, the addition of further ailments or conditions for which pharmacists can prescribe, prescribing authority for hormonal contraceptives, and limited prescribing authority for post-exposure prophylaxis. These revisions are a step forward in our goal to support pharmacy professionals in optimizing full scope of practice. NLPB aims to improve patients' access to healthcare by further enabling pharmacy professionals in our province to make use of their specialized skill set. For a full list of revisions to the regulations, please refer to the *Authorization to Prescribe Regulations - Revisions* article on page 6. Revisions have also been made to the *Pharmacy Regulations, 2014*, including the use of gender-neutral language and clarifications regarding inspections/site visits.

As we move toward the end of the first quarter of 2023, I am pleased with the progress we have seen already this year and I look forward to our continued work with the government and pharmacy professionals to advance the profession in the public's best interest.

Sincerely,

Noelle Patten



SELF-REGULATION— A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The goal of regulation is to protect the public from activities with inherent risk by ensuring there are qualification requirements in place to determine who can engage in these activities, standards for how activities are carried out, and processes for monitoring these activities. Self-regulation is when government grants a profession the privilege of regulating itself under specific legislation, recognizing that professional activities require a specialized knowledge to both practice and effectively regulate. Self-regulation is the hallmark of being considered a professional. However, the privilege of professional status and autonomy brings with it a responsibility to ensure all people within a profession place their duty to practice in the public interest above the profession's self-interests. Although the regulation of the profession is delegated to a governing body, the responsibility of ensuring public protection is still that of each individual professional.

The profession of pharmacy is one which serves the health and well-being of the public. It is this core value of helping others that has led many individuals to choose a career in pharmacy. In choosing to become a pharmacy professional, an individual must commit to holding the health and safety of each patient to be of primary consideration. As such, it is a shared goal of both the regulatory authority and the professional to ensure quality, patient-centred pharmacy care.

In simple terms, as a regulatory authority responsible to serve and protect the public, NLPB's role is to ensure only qualified practitioners are granted entry into the profession as well as to set the standards for competency and conduct within the profession and ensure they are met.

On the other hand, as regulated professionals, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are responsible for their own competence, professional development, and practice, as well as to be accountable for their own actions. This includes self-monitoring fitness to practice and continuously improving skills to remain proficient in pharmacy practice as it evolves. Pharmacy professionals

must take it upon themselves to understand the legislation, standards, and policies that relate to both their practice and practice setting so they can ensure they are practicing safely and ethically and within their scope.

Good regulation can only be achieved when all parties invested in the profession are involved, making cooperation and collaboration key to successful self-regulation. For example, as the regulatory authority, it is NLPB's responsibility to ensure that the standards it sets are up to date and applicable in real world practice to support regulated pharmacy professionals in providing high-quality care; while it is the regulated pharmacy professional's responsibility to inform the NLPB of changes to the practice environment and additional supports needed to enable them to practice well. It is also important to ensure standards are not so restrictive as to impede pharmacy professionals' practice, as it is ultimately the responsibility of the qualified professionals and not the regulator to provide high-quality care to their patients. For this reason, NLPB strives to empower regulated pharmacy professionals to use their professional judgement in their patients' best interests.

It is in the best interest of all those who participate in, collaborate with, and use the services of the pharmacy profession that it is well regulated. Successful self-regulation allows the public to maintain trust in the profession while also functioning to strengthen the profession to ensure practitioners can meet new challenges as they emerge.

We encourage you to volunteer for NLPB committees and board positions as positions become available. The call for nominations for the positions of Hospital Pharmacist, Pharmacy Technician, and At-Large Pharmacists will open later this spring.



BOARD MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIR

Taggart Norris

VICE CHAIR

Henry White

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Jason Ryan

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

BOARD-APPOINTED

Shirlene Murphy

Mark Sheppard

GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED

Currently Vacant

Currently Vacant

NON-VOTING

REGISTRAR

Noelle Patten

ELECTED MEMBERS

ZONE 1 PHARMACIST

Amy Randell

ZONE 2 PHARMACIST

Jason Ryan

ZONE 3 PHARMACIST

Jennifer Godsell

ZONE 4 PHARMACIST

Henry White

ZONE 5 HOSPITAL PHARMACIST

Nicole Kennedy

ZONE 6 PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

Jillian Thorne

ZONE 7 AT-LARGE PHARMACISTS

Timothy Buchanan

Taggart Norris

DEAN, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

Shawn Bugden



BOARD MEETING UPDATE

On February 24, the NLPB Board of Directors gathered for a meeting in St. John's.

Updates to Standards & Guidelines

Revisions to several documents, including the [Interpretation Guide - Ending the Pharmacist-Patient Relationship](#), the [Standards of Practice - Medical Assistance in Dying](#), and the [Standards of Pharmacy Operation - Hospital Pharmacy](#), were approved at this meeting. Additionally, the Guidelines Regarding the Sale of Dimenhydrinate were repealed.

Interpretation Guide - Ending the Pharmacist-Patient Relationship

In undertaking the review of these guidelines, a cross-country jurisdictional scan was conducted and language from other provinces was reviewed and considered. The approved revisions to the document focus mainly on documentation and ensuring continuity of care. The revised Interpretation Guide has been posted to the [NLPB website](#).

Standards of Practice - Medical Assistance in Dying

The review of these standards was undertaken following the amendment to the [Regulations for the Monitoring of Medical Assistance in Dying](#), effective January 2023, to expand the associated eligibility criteria and the reporting requirements for participating health care professionals. Noted revisions include the clarification of the role of pharmacists in assessing patient eligibility, the information required to be reported, and reference to the requirement for pharmacy technicians to participate in reporting. The revised standards have been posted to the [NLPB website](#).

Standards of Pharmacy Operation - Hospital Pharmacy

While the full review of these standards is not scheduled to take place until 2024, revisions to record keeping requirements were approved to bring the standards in line with the *Standards of Pharmacy Operation - Community Pharmacy* and allow hospital pharmacies to reduce their space-related needs for paper storage. The revised

standards have been posted to the [NLPB website](#).

Guidelines Regarding the Sale of Dimenhydrinate

In undertaking the review of these guidelines, consideration was given to the decision of the board in November 2021 to schedule by reference to the NAPRA National Drug Schedules (NDS). As such, to remain consistent with the NAPRA NDS, the board approved the repeal of these guidelines.

Updates to Regulations

The board of directors reviewed and approved revisions to the *Pharmacy Regulations, 2014* and the *Authorization to Prescribe Regulations* at the February meeting, prior to the regulations receiving ministerial approval. NLPB staff members consulted on the drafting of both sets of regulations.

Pharmacy Regulations, 2014

Revisions to the regulations include:

- gender-neutral language;
- addition of definitions for audio-visual technology, inspector, and proposed pharmacy;
- removal of the requirement that a policing agency must issue the required certificate of conduct;
- removal of specific details related to professional development (refer to the *Continuing Professional Development* article on page 7 for more details);
- clarification regarding the declaration requirements for the pharmacist in charge when renewing the pharmacy licence;
- clarification regarding the duties of the pharmacist in charge;
- addition of sections related to inspections and the powers of inspectors.

The revised regulations are available on the [NLPB website](#).

Authorization to Prescribe Regulations

Please refer to the *Authorization to Prescribe Regulations - Revisions* article on page 6.



AUTHORIZATION TO PRESCRIBE REGULATIONS — REVISIONS

Following an extensive period of consultation with the Pharmacy Practice Advisory Committee and collaboration with both the Department of Health and Community Services and the Pharmacists Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, revisions to the *Authorization to Prescribe Regulations* and the associated *Standards of Practice - Prescribing by Pharmacists* have been approved and are now published on the NLPB website. These revisions include:

Extensions

- Removal of the limitation on quantity of medication given during an extension to “the amount previously filled.”
- Removal of the limitation related to an extension not being permitted if the prescription had previously been extended.
- Addition of a pharmacist’s ability to extend prescriptions for up to 1 year.

Minor Ailments

- Revision to terminology regarding “Minor Ailments” to “Approved Ailments or Conditions”.
- Revisions to list of ailments/conditions:
 - Smoking Cessation changed to Nicotine Dependence to fully capture vaping.
 - Cold Sores to Herpes Simplex (Cold Sores) to remain consistent with the language used to refer to shingles as well as the language used in regulations for other provinces.
- Additions to the list of ailments/conditions:
 - Conjunctivitis

- Fungal Nail Infections
- Herpes Zoster (Shingles)
- Urinary Tract Infections (uncomplicated)

Hormonal Contraceptives

- Addition of a pharmacist’s authority to prescribe hormonal contraceptives with some limitations
 - Quantity: The amount of medication provided shall be determined by the pharmacist based on the individual circumstances of the patient but shall not exceed the equivalent of a 90 days’ supply if a patient has not previously been prescribed hormonal contraception or if a change in therapy is being prescribed. If well tolerated, refills for ongoing therapy may be prescribed.
 - Dosage Forms: Pharmacists may prescribe oral formulations, patches, medroxyprogesterone acetate depot injection, and vaginal rings.

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

- Addition of a pharmacist’s authority to prescribe post-exposure prophylaxis only with a referral from a regional medical officer of health or their designate.

NLPB continues to consult with government regarding additional changes to legislation as it pertains to pharmacy practice and ensuring the best interest of the public it serves. Pharmacy professionals will be made aware of any additional updates or revisions as they occur.

COMMUNITY PRACTICE SITE VISITS

Community practice site visits will commence this spring. During the on-site or virtual visit, the pharmacist-in-charge and NLPB Community Pharmacy Practice Consultant will work together to ensure all regulatory requirements and standards are being met, while also providing an opportunity for questions. This year, visits will focus on updates to the [Standards of Operation - Community Pharmacy](#) ahead of the September 2023 implementation deadline, including a review of security requirements, narcotic and controlled drug storage, record retention, and continuous quality improvement.



DOCUMENT RETENTION & STORAGE— NEW REQUIREMENTS

In August 2022, the revised [Standards of Pharmacy Operation - Community Pharmacy](#) were approved by the board with an implementation deadline of September 1, 2023. In this revision, standards pertaining to the storage and retention of patient records were modified, including the removal of minimum retention times for physical records in the presence of an electronic copy.

Per section 1.6 c) of the updated standards, patient records “must be retained in a secure, but readily accessible format (either physical or electronic) for a minimum of ten years.” Many pharmacy professionals have questioned if this update allows physical records to be destroyed immediately after creating an electronic copy. While technically there is no requirement to retain physical records in the presence of an electronic copy, in accordance with section 1.6 d) of the standards, processes must be in place to ensure electronic records are complete and secure prior to destroying original documents.

Policies and procedures around how the pharmacy processes, retains, stores, and destroys records should be in place. Questions to consider when developing these policies and procedures may

include:

- How frequently are electronic records being backed up? If the pharmacy needed to restore from a backup, how many days-worth of physical documents would need to be re-scanned?
- What processes are in place to ensure electronic prescription images are consistently updated in the event of a subsequent modification, such as a verbal order change/clarification made to the original?
- What processes are in place to ensure electronic records are complete? How will missing documents be discovered/reconciled prior to destroying physical records? For example, some practice management systems offer reports of “missing images” from prescription records.

Pharmacy professionals should also note that, in addition to written prescriptions and written copies of verbal prescriptions, patient records include any other records related to the provision of patient care. This includes documents such as patient assessment records, clinical documentation forms, compounding records, consultation records, and packaging records.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A review of the professional development (PD) requirements for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians is currently underway. A jurisdictional scan is being conducted and work has begun to review the current requirements and revise the PD Interpretation Guide. To enable NLPB to have more flexibility in performing this review, specific detail pertaining to PD requirements was removed from the *Pharmacy Regulations, 2014* in the recent regulation amendment. Once the review is complete, NLPB staff will consult with the PD Review Committee and make recommendations to the NLPB board of directors to ensure that PD requirements support meaningful learning and competency for registered pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

Professional Development (PD) Audit

NLPB is currently reassessing audit processes for PD based on a variety of factors, including alternate approaches to PD programs taken by our regulatory counterparts within the province and across Canada, and the implementation of new recording requirements in the NLPB Registrant Portal. Based on a recommendation from NLPB staff, the board made the decision not to engage the PD review committee to conduct a full-scope audit of 2022 PD activities. Instead, staff will conduct an administrative audit that will identify any registered pharmacy professional who did not enter the required number of CEUs for the 2023 registration renewal. The administrative PD audit will be conducted in April 2023 and aggregate results will be shared with all pharmacy professionals once the audit is complete.



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