



Newfoundland and
Labrador Pharmacy Board

*The Apothecary is the
newsletter of the
Newfoundland &
Labrador Pharmacy
Board.*

*It contains information
on a wide variety of
topics intended to
enhance the practice
of all pharmacists in
the province of
Newfoundland &
Labrador.*

*Pharmacists are
responsible for
reviewing any and all
information contained
within including
documents which are
made available on the
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The Apothecary

Summer 2015

Providing the Framework for Change

The Board has been busy during the last year preparing the protective frameworks necessary to support pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in this time of practice change.

Guided by the strategic goals, continuous quality improvement is the driving force behind every Board initiative. By clearly outlining the Board's expectation in the Standards of Practice and supporting and educating practitioners, the Board ensures that Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans are provided with excellent pharmacy care.

These new Standards mean that:

- Pharmacists assess individuals who seek care to understand their health status and health priorities.
- Pharmacists develop, implement, and monitor care plans and treatment alternatives cooperatively with individuals, their caregivers and other health professionals.
- Pharmacists assess the need for, and the appropriateness of, drug therapy and take action when they determine that drug therapy may be inappropriate.
- Pharmacists educate individuals and caregivers about drug therapy, support them in using drugs properly, and monitor to ensure drug therapy is appropriate for their health goals.
- Pharmacy technicians will join pharmacists in taking responsibility for processing and preparing prescriptions safely, accurately and efficiently.
- Pharmacists-in-Charge, owners and employers provide safe and effective practice environments that support quality practices and patient privacy.

Pharmacy practice is evolving at incredible speeds. Please ensure you and your pharmacy staff are familiar with the new legislation, Standards of Operation, Standards of Practice, expansion to practice opportunities and the Board's expectations in delivering excellent pharmacy care.

Registrar

New Standards of Pharmacy Operation for Community Pharmacies Approved by the Board

As communicated to all Pharmacists-in-Charge via email on June 30, 2015 and to all registrants via the most recent issue of *The PostScript*, at a recent meeting of the Board, new **Standards of Pharmacy Operation for Community Pharmacies** were approved and are currently posted on the **Standards, Guidelines and Policies** page of the NLPB website. These Standards of Pharmacy Operation reflect recent legislative changes and operational requirements that are necessary for expanded scopes of practice. Additionally, several existing Standards for community pharmacy have been incorporated so that all Board expectations for community pharmacy operation are contained in one document.

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians should review the Standards in detail to be familiar with changes to operation, policy and practice requirements including:

- Clarification regarding the security of the pharmacy premises as well as the dispensary itself
- The requirement for private patient counselling space
- The requirement for all pharmacies to be connected to the provincial electronic health record via the Pharmacy Network by January 2017
- An increase in the minimum requirements for refrigeration and temperature-monitoring
- Documentation requirements, including retention of physical and electronic records
- More detail regarding the professional responsibilities of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians
- Clarification regarding the requirements related to sending and receiving transferred prescriptions
- Clarification regarding the expectations related to the final check of a prescription and mandatory pharmacist-patient consultation prior to prescription release

The Board thanks all registrants in advance for their cooperation in meeting these Standards for community pharmacy. When all pharmacies meet the same minimum Standards, the public can be assured of the professions' commitment to safe, quality patient care and consistent pharmacy service as well as readiness for expanded scopes of practice of pharmacists.

Recent Revisions to Standards of Practice for Injection

Changes to the Standards for the Safe & Effective Administration of Drug Therapy via Inhalation or Injection were recently approved by the Board and have been posted on the **Standards, Guidelines & Policies** page of the NLPB website.

These changes expand the pharmacist's authority to inject drug therapy with pharmacists now permitted to administer **any drug therapy** by injection as long as it is administered either intramuscularly or subcutaneously.

A few other "house-keeping" changes were also made to the document, in addition to some revisions to the Inhalation or Injection Administration Documentation and Notification Form.

Why QA?

To date, 35 pharmacies across the province have undergone the community pharmacy assessment process. As noted in the Winter 2014 edition of *The Apothecary*, this year the NLPB has been working towards expanding the Quality Assurance Program to include a hospital pharmacy assessment strategy, in addition to refining the community pharmacy assessment program. As new Standards are developed, assessment tools are reviewed and modified. A task force is now in place to aid in the development of new Standards of Practice for hospital pharmacies and a new assessment tool for hospital pharmacies that is anticipated to be piloted in January 2016.

With this, it begs the question, “Why QA?” - Why dedicate so much time, energy and resources to this initiative? This question is much discussed by health regulators and practitioners across the country and was a core focus of this year’s Canadian Pharmacists Conference.

Just about every day, in some way, the sustainability of our health care system is called into question. In order to deliver optimal care to patients at the time that they need it, all health care professionals must practice to their full scope. Pharmacists, as part of this team, are relied upon by the public to use their knowledge and skills to positively impact the health of patients. In practice, pharmacists need to be empowered to use sound professional judgement to make decisions in the best interest of patients. In short, pharmacists have a skill-set that can improve health care delivery and are gaining authority to utilize training and skills to a greater extent; therefore, measures must be taken to ensure safe, quality pharmacy services are delivered to patients.

One of the greatest fears as a pharmacist is making an error that causes harm to a patient. Unfortunately, human error is recognized as inevitable to some degree, but, understandably, the public has very limited tolerance for mistakes committed within the health care system. The NLPB’s goal is to work with pharmacists-in-charge to discover and address system weaknesses before harm occurs as a result. Practice site assessments are learning opportunities that inform continuous quality improvement plans and, over time, monitor the progress of the resulting enhancement plan. During practice site assessments, pharmacists-in-charge are encouraged to create an environment of openness about problems and errors and work as a team with pharmacy staff to analyze the root-cause of errors, identify risks related to pharmacy workflow and implement changes to mitigate risk for error in the future. Knowledge obtained from error reporting and analysis can be shared among pharmacies to improve the overall safety of the practice of pharmacy.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of conducting practice site assessments is learning about the “good”; all pharmacy practice sites have areas that can be improved, but most also have areas in which minimum standards are exceeded. It is these best practices that raises the bar for everyone.

The NLPB Quality Assurance program is a “living” process that is constantly re-evaluated to reflect expanding scopes of practice, changing practice Standards, emerging best practices and the public’s expectations of the pharmacy profession. The Board aims to enhance patient outcomes by working with registrants to increase adherence to federal and provincial regulations, Standards of Practice, and the Code of Ethics. NLPB thanks registrants for their cooperation on this initiative to promote patient safety and excellence in pharmacy practice.

Pharmacy Technicians Now Being Registered in NL

In February of this year, the NLPB began registering applicants as pharmacy technicians. Despite this, many pharmacists, pharmacy owners and pharmacy assistants are unsure what this really means and what the potential role for a pharmacy technician is in their practice. In addition, there is still confusion regarding just who qualifies to be registered as a pharmacy technician and what the path is to this new category of registration with the NLPB.

In this issue, we hope to clarify this information for everyone concerned.

Path to Registration

Direct Path

Graduation from a CCAPP-Accredited Education Program

The most direct route to registration is by completing a CCAPP-accredited Pharmacy Technician Education Program. At this time, the only such program in NL is being offered through Keyin College in Grand Falls-Windsor. The first class of qualified candidates is expected to graduate in April 2016. For more information on this program, visit [Keyin College's website](#).

CCAPP (Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs) is also responsible for accrediting pharmacy programs across the country and their accreditation process is very rigorous. Graduates from these programs will meet the [NAPRA Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice](#).

*CCAPP-Graduates do not have to complete
the PEBC Evaluating Exam*

Alternate Path

available only until December 31, 2017

Completion of a Bridging Education Program

For those candidates who have not completed a CCAPP-accredited Education Program, section 17. (2) of the *Pharmacy Act, 2012* allows the Board to **temporarily** accept candidates for registration as a pharmacy technician who have completed a Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program. This program, developed and managed by NAPRA, is currently offered online through Selkirk College in British Columbia. It consists of four courses:

- Management of Drug Distribution Systems
- Pharmacology
- Product Preparation
- Professional Practice

Further details on these courses can be found on the [NAPRA website](#).

PEBC Evaluating Exam

PEBC requires applicants who have not completed a CCAPP-accredited program to successfully complete the Evaluating Exam prior to being eligible to write the Qualifying Exam. Applicants must show proof of completion of a minimum of 2000 hours of work experience in the field of pharmacy in the past 36 months.

This exam has been written several times in the province since September of 2010. To date, 50 candidates from NL have passed this exam with a further 10 registered for the Fall sitting this year.

Path to Registration (continued)

All Candidates

This is where the paths merge and all candidates must complete the same requirements.

PEBC Qualifying Exam

The PEBC Qualifying Exam is a national entry-to-practice exam for the assessment and certification of the competence of Pharmacy Technicians for the purposes of registration. Like the comparable pharmacist's exam, it consists of two components: a written multiple choice component (Part I) and an Objective Structured Practical Exam "OSPE" component (Part II).

While several candidates have travelled out of the province to complete this exam in the past, this Fall will see the first sitting of this exam offered in NL with 30 candidates registered to date.

NLPB Practical Training Program

The NLPB Practical Training Program for Pharmacy Technicians includes the completion of a series of activities with an approved preceptor. It is intended to verify the candidate's proficiency in:

- completing the final check of a prescription
- receiving a verbal order from a prescriber
- receiving and sending transferred prescriptions from another pharmacy
- professional communication skills, both written and verbal

For candidates following the direct path, this takes place over eight weeks following completion of the CCAPP-accredited program. Since candidates following the alternate path are generally completing the program at their workplace where they may have other responsibilities, they may complete the activities over an undetermined period of time, usually within 4-12 weeks.

NLPB Registration Exam

The NLPB Registration Exam for Pharmacy Technicians covers legislation and Standards of Practice specific to NL and is very similar to the current exam for Pharmacists. It consists of two parts: a multiple choice component (70%) and a long answer section (30%). There are regularly scheduled bi-monthly sittings with special sittings also available for an additional fee.

Final Steps to Registration

Once a candidate has successfully completed all the requirements, he or she can apply to the NLPB to be registered as a pharmacy technician. Pharmacy Technicians must also obtain liability insurance and renew their registration on an annual basis. Once registered, pharmacy technicians will be professionally accountable for their actions within their scope of practice.

Keep Up To Date

To keep up to date on this issue, we encourage all pharmacists, pharmacy owners and pharmacy assistants to visit the **[Pharmacy Technician Registration Information](#)** page of the NLPB website and to subscribe to the special contact list by sending your email address to inforx@nlpb.ca with the subject line "subscribe to pharmacy technician contact list".

We also encourage all readers of this issue of The Apothecary to share this information with all dispensary staff at the pharmacy (especially those who are not registrants of NLPB) and to have a discussion regarding where pharmacy technicians could be utilized in the practice site, especially with an eye to future expansions to the pharmacist's scope of practice.

Integrating Pharmacy Technicians into Pharmacy Practice

How are regulated pharmacy technicians making an impact and using their full scope? Here are a couple of examples from Ontario where pharmacy technicians have been registered since 2011.

Sarah-Lynn Dunlop, RPhT, loves practicing to her full scope – so that the pharmacists she works with can practice to theirs.

Dunlop is a pharmacy technician at Stuart Ellis IDA Pharmacy in Collingwood and at Collingwood General & Marine Hospital. At the community pharmacy, she conducts the final check on prescriptions, especially blister packs, and takes verbal prescription orders over the phone. At the hospital, she reviews the technical accuracy of prescriptions (one technician checks another's work), and helps to manage the drug distribution system.

How does her role ultimately benefit patients? "It frees the pharmacist," says Dunlop. "In retail pharmacy for sure it allows the pharmacist to spend more time answering the patient's questions, and checking the therapeutic appropriateness."

Becoming a regulated healthcare professional was essential to Dunlop. "It validates what we do," she says. "Having professional and ethical standards pushes us and makes everyone better."

Tracey Beaupre, RPhT, has enjoyed many rewarding opportunities throughout her career in pharmacy. She has been at Lennox and Addington County General Hospital in Napanee for just over 15 years. For the first ten, her name badge said "technician". When the College began to regulate technicians, her badge changed to "assistant". It was only in October that she was again able to wear the "technician" title proudly.

What has changed for Beaupre? "I am more accountable for my actions," she says. "I always felt responsible, but now I am legally."

As one of five technicians in the pharmacy (along with two pharmacists), Beaupre handles inventory management, drug distribution and order entry. "We're the frontline and see the orders first, and we bring any issues to the pharmacist," says Beaupre. "I take a best possible medication history from each patient and the physicians use this information to generate their medication orders. I have to make sure that I am very accurate and precise."

Defining Each Role - The Final Check

Pharmacist (cognitive)

Assesses the patient and authorizes that drug "X" is the appropriate medication to take.

Counsels the patient on how to take the medication and monitor for best possible health outcomes.

Pharmacy Technician (technical)

Ensures that the vial contains the correct amount of drug "X" and that the information on the label is correct as per the prescription.

This article contains excerpts from an article that was originally written by Stuart Foxman and published in the Ontario College of Pharmacists' quarterly publication Pharmacy Connection. For the complete article, please visit <http://www.ocpinfo.com/practice-education/practice-tools/articles/everyonebetter/>

Defining Each Role - Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacy Assistants

To further clarify the role of pharmacy technicians versus the role of pharmacy assistants, the new *Standards of Pharmacy Operation for Community Pharmacies* includes the following:

Role of the Pharmacy Technician

A **pharmacy technician** may:

- obtain, enter, and record patient profile information;
- receive, transcribe, and record verbal prescriptions from prescribers, in accordance with federal and provincial legislation;
- transfer prescriptions to and receive prescriptions from other pharmacies;
- ensure that a prescription is complete and authentic;
- prepare and compound prescriptions;
- ensure the accuracy of a prepared prescription, including performing the final technical check; and
- provide technical information to a patient when a therapeutic assessment or clinical judgment by the pharmacist is not required. (for example, a pharmacy technician could demonstrate the use of an EpiPen as a device, but not discuss the effects of epinephrine, specifically)

A **pharmacy technician** may assist in gathering information from a patient about a drug or a medical condition if necessary to assess the appropriateness of drug therapy, but the pharmacist remains responsible for obtaining sufficient information to assess the patient and the appropriateness of drug therapy.

A **pharmacy technician** must not counsel a patient, directly or indirectly, about a drug or a medical condition, and a pharmacist may not delegate the responsibility to counsel a patient to a pharmacy technician.

A **pharmacy technician** must recognize when the professional expertise of a pharmacist is required and consult with a pharmacist in that case.

Role of the Pharmacy Assistant

A **pharmacy assistant** may participate in administrative or technical functions related to the operation of a community pharmacy where the pharmacy assistant is directly supervised by a pharmacist or pharmacy technician and appropriate procedures, checks, and controls are in place to ensure the safe and effective delivery of pharmacy services.

Postscript Recap

Since the last issue of *The Apothecary*, the Board has posted several issues of *The Postscript*. A summary of some key articles is provided below. Please visit the [NLPB Newsletters page](#) of the NLPB website to view all past issues.

February 2015

- Deactivating “Old” Prescriptions to Prevent “Wrong Dose” or “Duplicate Therapy” Errors

March 2015

- Changes to the Provincial Drug Schedules

April 2015

- Pharmacy Student or Intern Administration of Drug Therapy by Inhalation or Injection

May 2015

- Update on Pharmacy Technician Registration
- Prescription Transfers
- Identification – Name Tags and Telephone Protocols
- Update on Issues Related to the Opioid Dependence Treatment Standards of Practice
- Filling Prescriptions from Out of Province Prescribers

June 2015

- Reporting Renovations

July 2015

- New Standards of Pharmacy Operation Approved for Community Pharmacies
- Changes to Process for Becoming a Pharmacist-in-Charge
- Buprenorphine-naloxone Dispensing Requirements
- REMINDER-Pharmacists are Responsible for Maintaining Professional Liability Insurance Throughout the Year

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