



Adapting a Prescription – Key Messages for Pharmacists

Background:

As you are likely aware there has been some media attention over the past few days regarding the new authority granted to pharmacists to adapt existing prescriptions which comes into effect on January 1, 2009. In support of this expanded scope the College of Pharmacists of BC has established Professional Practice Policy #58 (PPP-58) *Medication Management – Adapting a Prescription* and subsequent Orientation Guide designed to guide pharmacists in the safe and effective implementation of adapting prescriptions.

This material was mailed to all registrants earlier this month (if you have not received it please contact the College at 604.733.2440 or 800.663.1940) and the College, along with the BC Pharmacy Association, has just completed the first few in a series of scheduled Orientation Sessions throughout the province this fall. These materials are accessible through the College website (www.bcpharmacists.org) and online registration to one of the Orientation Sessions is ongoing.

Media Requests:

If you are approached by the local media for an interview regarding pharmacists' new authority to adapt prescriptions we strongly recommend that you direct these inquiries to the College for comment. Contact: Lori DeCou, Communications Director direct at (604) 676-4204 or lori.decou@bcpharmacists.org. *Note: this is particularly true if you have not yet had an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the new policy*

If however, you feel comfortable and would like to provide comment to the media or just want to help address public inquiries here are a few key messages for your reference that the College is using in its ongoing communications:

Key Messages / Important Facts:

GENERAL MESSAGES:

- pharmacists are healthcare professionals and medication experts, with a minimum of 5 years university training in drug therapy
- to ensure public safety the College has established a comprehensive policy regarding this expanded scope of practice and all pharmacists must declare that they have read and understood these guidelines before they can adapt a prescription
- authorization does NOT mean obligation



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- each potential adaptation must be evaluated independently and the individual pharmacist must use their own professional judgment to determine if it is in the best interest of the patient to adapt their prescription and if they want to exercise their authority to do so
- a pharmacist can, if they have sufficient information about the patient and their therapy, adapt a prescription but only up to a maximum of the validity of the original prescription (most prescriptions have an expiry of 1-year, the exception is oral contraceptives which is 2-years)
- this new authorization does not, under any circumstances, mean that a patient will no longer need to see their physician
- at some point, during the life of that prescription the pharmacist will be referring the patient back to the physician
- patients should not assume that pharmacists will now automatically adapt (renew) all prescriptions (even those for routine chronic conditions)
- good communication is the key to good healthcare; patients are encouraged to get to know their pharmacist – the more their pharmacist knows, the more they can help

ADDITIONAL:

- adaptation activities include; changing the dose, formulation or regimen of a prescription, renewing a prescription or making a therapeutic drug substitution within the same therapeutic class
- adaptation authority applies to existing prescriptions only and a pharmacist must have the original prescription
- does not involve a pharmacist initiating a prescription nor activities requiring diagnosis
- excludes; narcotics, controlled drugs and targeted substances
- when a pharmacist adapts a prescription they assume responsibility and liability for that prescription (min \$2 M liability insurance required)
- if a pharmacist does not feel comfortable enough to adapt but has concerns about the prescription as written this new authority does not stop the pharmacist from doing what they do now – contact the prescriber prior to filling the prescription and get authorization for a change
- College has quality assurance mechanisms in place to audit pharmacists to ensure compliance and ensure the safe and effective adaptation of prescriptions