



Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board

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MEMO TO PHARMACISTS AND PHARMACY OWNERS

On behalf of the Board, I would like to briefly take a moment to update pharmacists and pharmacy owners on the movement both nationally and in NL toward regulating pharmacy technicians. No doubt you have heard much about this topic in recent months and have seen several recent communications from the Board.

The main emphasis of these recent communications has been on distributing information on the upcoming Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Examination, which is scheduled to be held in St. John's, Grand Falls-Windsor and Corner Brook on September 18, 2010. This exam is the first step in the process of regulation for those pharmacy assistants working in community and hospital pharmacies at this time who meet the eligibility criteria and VOLUNTARILY WISH TO PROCEED THROUGH THE REGULATORY PROCESS.

To clarify the Board's perspective:

- While the regulation of technicians is a Board process, there are many other stakeholders whose input is important. PEBC, NAPRA, employers, government, technician/assistant schools and accrediting bodies will play a role in technician regulation. Our website outlines the path to regulated status for both those in the field currently and those graduating from accredited programs in the future.
- While some pharmacy assistants may choose to do so, the Board does not envision requiring pharmacy assistants to become regulated pharmacy technicians in the future. There is a wide variety of hospital and community pharmacy practice environments in Newfoundland and Labrador today and, as pharmacy evolves, this is expected to remain the case. Our geography dictates the need for a variety of settings. As such, current pharmacy assistants (sometimes called "technicians" today) will still be able to work in the future and will have a specific role to fill. However, pharmacists in some practice environments may see the benefits in incorporating a new role with an expanded scope of practice into their practice setting – the regulated pharmacy technician.
- Given the above points, it is likely we will see a variety of community and hospital pharmacy practice models in the future, such as:
 - ⇒ Pharmacists working alone
 - ⇒ Pharmacists delegating to pharmacy assistants
 - ⇒ Pharmacists delegating to pharmacy assistants and working with regulated pharmacy technicians
 - ⇒ Pharmacists with all regulated pharmacy technicians

Employers, in consultation with their employees, will ultimately be the ones to make the decision as to which business model works best for them. This decision will take into account the needs of their organization now as well as in the future as pharmacy technician regulation and pharmacy practice continue to evolve. The future is exciting and will provide many new opportunities for our profession.

Please stay engaged and informed on this changing landscape. A Professional Practice Sub-Committee, consisting of pharmacists and pharmacy assistants from varying settings is in place and working through the process. Any feedback sent to the Board is being collated and being used to develop targeted communications and an updated "frequently asked questions" which should be available in the near future. I encourage you to visit the NL Pharmacy Board website at www.nlpb.ca for updates on this topic. Also, please encourage any pharmacy assistants at your pharmacy sign up for our email list to receive updates directly.

Respectfully,
Keith Bailey, Chair, NL Pharmacy Board

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