



# Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board

## Policy

### Licensing Requirements for Hospital Pharmacies providing Telepharmacy to Remote Hospital Sites

Approved December 5, 2011

Revised February 17, 2012

#### Introduction

Telepharmacy is the provision of pharmacy services to rural and remote hospitals or facilities which are not regularly staffed by a pharmacist. This type of pharmacy service usually takes place via a two-way video telecommunication link between a licensed pharmacy and a remote site. Generally speaking, a registered pharmacist at a licensed pharmacy site (primary pharmacy) supervises a pharmacy assistant or technician at a remote site at all times through the use of video conferencing technology. The pharmacy assistant or technician prepares the prescription drug for dispensing by the pharmacist. The pharmacist communicates face-to-face in real time with the pharmacy assistant or technician through audio, video and computer links.

#### Licensing Requirements

1. All remote sites must be associated with a licensed (primary) pharmacy.
2. If a Pharmacist-in-Charge wishes to operate a remote site via telepharmacy, he/she shall provide the Board with a completed Application for Telepharmacy Approval at least **thirty (30) days** before the proposed opening date of the remote site.
3. The application must be accompanied by a detailed diagram of the layout of the remote site.
4. The application must be accompanied by a complete policy and procedure manual as detailed below.
5. Telepharmacy services will be approved only when the remote site is located in an area of the province that does not have suitable access to necessary hospital pharmacy services.
6. An inspection must be completed prior to the opening of the remote site. The inspection date shall be scheduled in consultation with a Pharmacy Board inspector.
7. If the primary pharmacy later wishes to add additional remote sites, relocate a site or close a site, a new application or closure form must be submitted to and approved by the Pharmacy Board in accordance with number 2 above.

#### Operating Requirements

1. The pharmacist-in-charge of the primary pharmacy is responsible for all activity at the remote site.
2. The remote site must be under the direct supervision of a registered pharmacist at the primary pharmacy during all hours of operation.
3. The remote site may not remain open if:

- a) there is any interruption in the audio, video or computer links between the remote site and the primary pharmacy;
  - b) there is no pharmacy assistant on duty at the remote site; or
  - c) there is no pharmacist on duty at the primary pharmacy to supervise the remote site.
4. All applicable Standards of Practice for Hospital Pharmacies apply to the remote site.
5. A sign must be posted at the dispensary counter of the remote site advising patients and staff when the site is operating in telepharmacy mode.
6. A prescription dispensed from the remote site should have labeling that makes it distinguishable from a prescription dispensed from the primary pharmacy.
  - a) the name, address and telephone number of the primary pharmacy;
  - b) a unique identifier, attached to the prescription number, that indicates the drug has been dispensed from the remote site; and
  - c) the municipal address of the remote site.
7. The pharmacist-in-charge is responsible for ensuring that inspections and audits of the remote site are conducted by a registered pharmacist at least once every three months and that written records of all such inspections and audits are retained for a period of at least two years.
8. There must be a policy and procedure manual outlining:
  - a) the process by which the pharmacy assistant at the remote site receives and processes the prescription;
  - b) the process for discussing drug related problems with the prescriber;
  - c) the procedure for extemporaneous compounding of prescriptions;
  - d) the procedure for supplying compliance packaging;
  - e) the procedure for dispensing narcotics and controlled drugs;
  - f) the contingency plan in the event of an interruption in audio, video, or computer link to the central pharmacy;
  - g) the contingency plan to ensure continuity in pharmacy service in the event that either or both the pharmacy assistant or supervising pharmacist are unavailable for work on short notice;
  - h) the records which must be kept at both the remote site and the primary pharmacy;
  - i) the procedure for performing a final check on the packaging or pre-packaging of drugs, including container selection and labeling, prior to dispensing;
  - j) the maintenance of patient privacy and confidentiality during all communication with patient or prescriber; and
  - k) the storage and security of all medications at the remote site.