

Executive Summary on OPA Submission to HPRAC

In April 2008, OPA was notified that the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC) was conducting scope of practice reviews for those professions that are most directly involved in interprofessional care to ensure that there are no legislative, regulatory, structural or process barriers to members of the profession working to the maximum of their scope of practice or to working in interprofessional settings or teams.

On June 30th, OPA made a formal submission to HPRAC that strongly supported this review based on information obtained through attendance at consultation sessions and from input and recommendations from practicing pharmacists. Fundamental to our submission was the recognition that:

- OPA is committed to promoting the practice of the profession in a manner that maximizes our positive impact on the wellness of patients, while seeking adequate recognition and compensation for pharmacists' skills, training and experience.
- OPA works collaboratively with governments, regulatory bodies, advocacy groups, trade and professional associations, insurers and the pharmaceutical industry to ensure pharmacists contribute at the highest possible level of their abilities to help deliver optimal healthcare for Ontarians.
- Through our Drug Information and Research Centre (DIRC), OPA provides continuing education on the practice of pharmacy, champions application of enabling technologies to assist our professional practice, and is the leader in the provision of credible drug information in Canada to assist health professionals in their delivery of patient care related to medication management.
- OPA values and protects the trust placed in pharmacists by the public, and specifically patients and other healthcare professionals as medication management experts, and communicates directly with patients both individually and through media to build and reinforce that trust.

With these core values, coupled with strong support for interdisciplinary practice, appropriate compensation for pharmacists' professional services and the highest quality assurance and accountability standards, OPA submitted a proposal for nine changes to the Pharmacy Act and the Drugs and Pharmacies Regulation Act to allow for expansion of pharmacists' scope of practice that include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Refilling chronic medications under a defined protocol when the appropriate medical information is available to the pharmacist and they can accurately determine the suitability of the refill.
2. Refilling a patient's chronic medication on a one-time basis if the original prescriber is not available.

3. Ordering and receiving laboratory tests, as needed, under a defined set of protocols.
4. Monitoring and adjusting doses of chronic medications under a prescribed protocol.
5. Adapting the dose, dosage form, product selected or quantity required of a prescription for the appropriate treatment of the patient.
6. Initiating prescription therapy for minor ailments from a set formulary using an established protocol for assessment.
7. Initiating therapy for travel prophylaxis and immunizations when needed.
8. Facilitating and administering immunizations and other injectable drugs.
9. Assessing, initiating and monitoring the most appropriate therapy for smoking cessation.

As both societal expectations increase and financial pressures mount on our Health Care system in Ontario, greater utilization of pharmacists' expertise will be critical as part of interdisciplinary practice, with the opportunity to ensure positive healthy outcomes for patients in a cost effective manner.