

Submission to the Standing Committee on Social Policy **Highlights**

On the matter of Bill 179, Regulated Health Professions Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009, the submission of the Ontario Pharmacists' Association can be summarized as follows:

- OPA is pleased with the recommendations proposed in Bill 179 regarding pharmacists' professional services. The Association and its members are firmly committed to working with other stakeholders to ensure that Ontarians benefit from an interprofessional approach to healthcare.
- Opportunities for pharmacists as proposed in Bill 179:
 - Refill medications for chronic use;
 - Adapt and adjust medications;
 - Prescribe medications for smoking cessation;
 - Order lab tests;
 - Prick skin (e.g., show patients how to use a lancing device); and
 - Give a drug by injection or immunization for education and demonstration purposes.
- Opportunities for pharmacists beyond Bill 179
 - Provide routine immunization to patients as occurs successfully in other jurisdictions
 - Prescribe Schedule I medications for travel prophylaxis and Schedule II, III and U products for chronic disease management and monitoring; and
 - Establish a prescription intervention program whereby pharmacists help prevent adverse drug events and help patients and/or private payors save on medication costs.
- OPA is concerned about any broad-based changes to the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act (DPRA) that would permit dispensing without the physical presence of the pharmacist, regardless of location. There may be some areas of the province where access to pharmacist services are not readily available, and as such OPA recommends that the language of Bill 179 be modified to enable remote dispensing only in locations where access to care is truly limited. Furthermore, OPA recommends that a formal pilot project be undertaken prior to implementation of remote dispensing to ensure patient safety is not compromised.
- Bill 179 proposes many changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit Act (ODBA) which will all have significant impact on Ontario's pharmacists. OPA believes that the executive officer of the Ontario Drug Benefit Plan currently has sufficient powers under the ODBA and its Regulations to ensure that the plan is judiciously administered.

- As an appendix to the formal submission, OPA is including an economic analysis of the value of pharmacy services. It includes data on significant cost savings to the system when pharmacists practice in an expanded scope.
- Bill 179, if passed, would allow multiple health professions to dispense, compound or sell medication to patients. OPA recommends that if multiple regulated health profession are granted the ability to dispense, compound and sell drugs, the standards for these controlled acts should be closely aligned with those of pharmacy.
- On the issue of a College supervisor, OPA fully supports the Ontario College of Pharmacists in their position that this new role is unnecessary and detrimental to the concept of self-regulation.
- OPA requests that pharmacists be recognized in Regulation 965 of the Public Hospitals Act, allowing pharmacies practicing in hospital settings the same range of authorities granted to other pharmacists as part of an increased scope.