

May 6, 2009

## Remote Dispensing Key Messages

### Access and service

- It's important for patients to understand that a machine can't provide the same kind of care and service they'd get in a pharmacy from a pharmacist. Patients who urgently need certain medications would still need to travel elsewhere to get their prescriptions filled.
- Machines will have a limited number of medications, in limited quantities. Other than dispensing, they won't be able to provide any services, like counseling in drug interactions, splitting tablets, providing medications in liquid form, and advancing small supplies of medication when a physician can't be reached for confirmation.
- We support increased access to pharmacist services in underserved regions of Ontario. But more than 90 per cent of pharmacists who responded to OPA's remote dispensing survey indicated there's no problem with access to pharmacy services in their area – so it's unclear how or if remote dispensing could actually improve access.
- In isolated or underserved areas, remote dispensing may be better than nothing.

### Safety

- We support enhanced technology in pharmacy practice, as shown by our interest in e-health and electronic health records. But technology can fail, and these failures can put patient care at risk.
- Pharmacists know how to identify potential prescription forgeries. But it's much harder to do that when it's a scanned copy of a prescription on a computer screen.
- The safe practice requirements for remote dispensing locations should be the same as those for traditional pharmacies.