

My name is Johanne Fortier. I am a pharmacist in Ontario, and have also been a Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) for the past 7 years. I do work extensively, in the community, with persons with diabetes, from the time they are diagnosed, to the time they need to go on insulin, and more.

As a CDE, I am constrained by my pharmacy scope of practice as to what I can teach my patients, as the CDE certification does not give me any more privileges. I have always been very careful to instruct patients using “dummies” for injections, and make sure that they do lancing and injections themselves, under supervision.

Where I also run into problems, is when a patient who has just been put on insulin by his family physician needs to adjust the dose and I have to do the back-and-forth to suggest a dosage change, have it authorized/signed, and contact the patient again to communicate that change. The phone/fax delays can be quite important and I have had to use professional judgement at times, on week-ends, holidays and nights, to help patients out. But it would be wonderful and in the patient’s best interest, to be able to do it “legally” and in a timely fashion. I have never been refused a signature, ever, so far, and physicians have been most appreciative, but I am still uncomfortable doing so.

As for the prescription renewal authorizations, it seems really silly to have to fax a physician because her patient requires more testing strips or insulin. And in order for the patient to get her diabetes supplies covered by ODB or private plans, we need that signature.

I do think that in the face of our changing profession, adjustments have to be made as soon as possible, to our scope of practice.

Thank you.

Johanne Fortier, pharmacist/CDE
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