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Annie Schiefer, Project Manager
Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council
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Dear Ms. Annie Schiefer,

I am writing to you today to express my support for the increased scope of practice for pharmacists in Ontario. Pharmacists are medication management experts who are committed to providing the best health care possible in a patient-centred, collaborative environment. We are definitely under utilized!

Over the years, the pharmacist's role has evolved to include responsibility not only for the procurement and dispensing of medications, but also for their safe and effective use by patients, the prevention of disease, and the promotion of health and wellness.

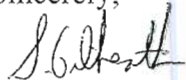
As a pharmacist, I assess and refer patients to other health care providers, work with physicians to modify prescriptions, manage complex medication regimes from multiple prescribers, and provide primary care to patients who don't have a family physician.

My ability to perform to my full potential is limited by regulations that have not kept up with the pharmacist's expanding role in patient care and education. For example, as part of current practice, patients and caregivers expect me to pierce a patient's finger to demonstrate how to use a lancing device for chronic care monitoring, administer medication such as insulin to demonstrate proper technique, and administer medication when teaching patients how to use inhalers.

I support the OPA's position that pharmacists should be able to refill chronic medications defined under a set protocol; refill a patient's chronic medication on a one-time basis if the original prescriber is not available (thus freeing up the physician's time!!); order and receive laboratory tests, as needed, under a defined set of protocols; monitor and adjust doses of chronic medications under a prescribed protocol; adapt a prescription; initiate therapy for minor ailments from a set formulary; initiate therapy for travel prophylaxis and immunizations when needed; provide immunization services to patients, if necessary.

As the pharmacist in charge of the smoking cessation program at Marchese Health Care, I am limited by time restraints in assessing, initiating and monitoring the most appropriate therapeutic approach for smoking cessation. If these duties were included in our scope of practice, there may be more time and reimbursement allowed for this, thus improving the health of our clients, decreasing the overall health burden on the medical system.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Gilbreath, RPh
Pharmacist at Marchese Health Care
Hamilton, ON