

Dear Ms. Schiefer,

Pharmacists are medication management experts who are committed to providing the best health care possible in a patient-centred, collaborative environment.

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.

For most people, their pharmacist is the most visible and accessible health care provider - someone who can respond promptly to a patient's need for medication or advice.

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.

As the population ages and medication use increases, I am frequently called upon to intervene on my patients' behalf to ensure medication therapy is appropriate and patients adhere to treatment plans.

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 blood sugar 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:

- a.. refill chronic medications defined under a set protocol
- b.. refill a patient's chronic medication on a one-time basis if the original prescriber is not available
- c.. order and receive laboratory tests, as needed, under a defined set of protocols
- d.. monitor and adjust doses of chronic medications under a prescribed protocol
- e.. adapt a prescription
- f.. initiate therapy for minor ailments from a set formulary
- g.. initiate therapy for travel prophylaxis and immunizations when needed
- h.. provide immunization services to patients, if necessary
- i.. assess, initiate and monitor the most appropriate therapeutic approach for smoking cessation.

Since pharmacy technicians will soon be regulated in Ontario and take on responsibility for the technical aspects of dispensing, pharmacists will have the opportunity to more effectively use their time, skills and knowledge.

Pharmacists are willing and able to play an important role in making Ontario's health care system more efficient and effective. To make the most of our accessibility and expertise as pharmacists, our scope of practice needs to expand so we have greater responsibility for prescribing decisions, and the tools we need to monitor drug therapy outcomes, to better meet the needs of Ontarians now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Rob

Rob Parsons  
Pharmacist/Owner  
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