

As a pharmacist practising in Ontario since 2003, I support reviewing the pharmacist's role within Ontario's health to make the most of our accessibility and medication expertise. If our scope of practice included more of the tools needed to take greater responsibility for prescribing decisions, we would be better able to meet the needs of Ontarians now and in the future.

Examples I've encountered in my practice where the scope of practice of pharmacy has limited my ability to help a patient and to prevent extra use of the healthcare system are: 1) Unless I was to leave patients without, having to advance medications for chronic conditions when physicians are on holidays. I am sure the physicians are swamped with refill requests the moment they return from vacation. 2) Helping a diabetic learn how her insulin could be adjusted to improve blood glucose control, but being unable to 'officially' tell her to do so and having to tell her she couldn't get the insulin on prescription insulin (and hence paid for by the government drugplan) without going to a clinic or the hospital. 3) Verifying the immunization/prophylaxis recommendations for a patient's vacation and counselling them, then having them make appointment to get a prescription for the medication and then a second appointment to have it administered. I also counsel on other travel-related medication issues like insulin storage, glucose control and emergency planning for diabetics, jet lag (esp. for patients with known sleeping problems) and any known medication labelling requirements for travel.

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; monitor and adjust doses or otherwise adapt prescription for chronic medications under a prescribed protocol; 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; and assess, initiate and monitor the most appropriate therapeutic approach for smoking cessation.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to the results of this scope of practice review.

Sincerely,
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