

Dear Annie Shiefer, Project Manager

I am writing this letter to indicate my support for the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the Ontario Pharmacists Association as they work towards expanding pharmacists' scope of practice. As a community pharmacist in rural Ontario, I am a crucial member of our healthcare team and have taken on an expanded role to compensate for our shortage of healthcare professionals. I am very often the first point of contact for community members seeking healthcare advice as I am the most accessible and visible health care provider. As this first point of contact, I often work with the physician to make medication recommendations. My recommendations are usually readily accepted by the physician but I believe that my ability to perform to my full potential is limited by current regulations. In order to make more informed decisions pharmacists' should have access to their patient's full medical charts including lab work. I also service a long term care facility and often have to make medication recommendations to the physician. I feel that in order to prevent drug related problems I should have access to resident's lab work. In the past year, medical directives have expanded my role to include warfarin dosing for these resident's based on their INR results. Taking on this responsibility has been very successful in freeing up the physician's time to provide better health care to the rest of our community. Collaborating regularly with the physician in my community I have come to believe that expanding the role of pharmacists' is the next logical step to improve patient-centred care and allow the most effective use of time, skills and knowledge of our community healthcare providers.

I am very eager to expand my roles and responsibilities as a pharmacist and have shown this by furthering my education in a number of areas. Most recently, I have become a Certified Diabetes Educator. This has provided me the knowledge and skills to provide support that is necessary to help diabetic community members understand and better control their condition. By taking on this extra role, I believe I can decrease healthcare costs by preventing unnecessary hospital visits and costs involved with the progression of diabetes. This fall, I will be completing a course in the Management of Oral Anticoagulation Therapy. This will also increase my scope as a community pharmacist and provide the knowledge to continue and expand my active role in warfarin dosing as discussed previously. I have also taken the Certified Geriatric Pharmacist course to expand my knowledge and role in caring for my geriatric community members.

Presently, I have limited time to provide this “extra care” that I am fully capable of providing without falling behind on daily responsibilities. I feel that an expanded scope that includes a reasonable reimbursement model would provide the time and resources necessary to improve the health of my community. Pharmacists are experts in medication and disease management and are the most accessible healthcare provider. Knowing this, it only makes sense to expand their role to make our health care system more effective and efficient. It is very evident that pharmacists are willing and able to take on more responsibilities but before this can happen our scope of practice needs to reflect these new views. Our scope needs to be expanded so we have greater responsibility for prescribing decisions, and the tools we need to monitor drug therapy outcomes. As pharmacists we have the knowledge and skills to improve the health of Ontarians, but only when our scope catches up to our evolved roles will this become evident.

Sincerely,

Dionne Smith, R.Ph., CDE