

## TITLE

**PHARMACIST PRESCRIBING OF MEDICATION ORDERS****SCOPE**

Provincial

**DOCUMENT #**

HCS-15

**APPROVAL AUTHORITY**

Alberta Health Services Executive Committee

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**SPONSOR**

Vice President Clinical Support Services

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Not applicable

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November 17, 2019

**NOTE:** The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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**OBJECTIVES**

- To ensure consistency within Alberta Health Services (AHS) Pharmacy Services for pharmacists when prescribing medications.

**PRINCIPLES**

AHS is committed to supporting and providing an environment in which pharmacists can practice to their full scope as defined in the *Health Professions Act* (Alberta) with respect to restricted prescribing of medications.

**APPLICABILITY**

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

**ELEMENTS****1. Authority**

- 1.1 Pharmacists shall prescribe medications according to standards set out in the *Alberta College of Pharmacists Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians*.
- 1.2 Pharmacists who have attained additional prescribing authority in accordance with the *Alberta College of Pharmacists Regulations and Bylaws* may prescribe medications, pursuant to a diagnosis, in the ongoing drug therapy management of patients in their care.

- 1.3 Pharmacists are not authorized to prescribe narcotics, controlled drugs or targeted substances such as benzodiazepines which are regulated federally by the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (Canada) and its regulations.

## 2. Support for Pharmacist Prescribing

- 2.1 Pharmacy Services shall be supportive of pharmacists in their efforts to obtain additional prescribing authorization from the Alberta College of Pharmacists.
- 2.2 Pharmacists shall notify their manager and their assigned Clinical Practice Leader when any changes occur to their prescribing authorization status (i.e., approval or termination of additional prescribing authorization).
- 2.3 The zone or site pharmacy services manager shall ensure that proper notification and communication occurs between Pharmacy Services and the appropriate clinical programs, prior to initiating additional prescribing privileges.

## 3. Collaboration

- 3.1 In a team environment, pharmacists prescribing medications will collaborate with the **most responsible health practitioner** or delegate.
- 3.2 The most responsible health practitioner retains overall responsibility for patient care and must be made aware of any **new prescriptions** and any orders **adapting a prescription**.
  - a) The ordering pharmacist will notify the most responsible health practitioner either at the time the medication is ordered or at the next regular patient rounds, in accordance with the significance of the medication order, the patient's clinical condition, and potential ramifications of the medication order.
- 3.3 Pharmacists shall establish a relationship with the patient, commensurate with the type of prescribing required.
  - a) Pharmacists who are not providing direct patient care may adapt a prescription only if the appropriate laboratory values, indication for medication use, and other patient specific factors that may influence the decision to adapt are known.
  - b) In addition, certain patient care areas may have policies that preclude medication prescribing by those who are not members of the direct patient care team. In these cases, orders provided by pharmacists who are not members of the direct patient care team would not be accepted.
- 3.4 Where a pharmacist is consulted into the care of the patient, they shall do so in a manner similar to that of a consulting practitioner, and consistent with the *AHS Medical Staff Bylaws* and *AHS Medical Staff Rules*. The most responsible health practitioner will identify whether the pharmacist consultant is being requested to provide orders as suggestions (to be approved by the most responsible health

practitioner before implementation), or to provide orders for direct implementation.

#### 4. Pharmacist Prescribing

- 4.1 Adapting a prescription based on the AHS Provincial Drug Formulary's *Therapeutic Interchange List* is not considered pharmacist prescribing.
- a) Medications on the *Therapeutic Interchange List* are reviewed and agreed upon by the AHS Drugs & Therapeutics Committee.
- 4.2 Pharmacists are required to have read and adhere to all ancillary policies pertaining to prescribing.
- 4.3 Pharmacists shall prescribe medications in the following circumstances:
- a) for the purpose of adapting a medication order, or
- b) as part of ongoing management of patient care as part of a collaborative care team (additional prescribing authority required).
- 4.4 Where a pharmacist has ordered a medication, they shall ensure that there is a documented plan for follow-up of results, including a clearly articulated mechanism whereby follow-up by the ordering pharmacist is available should there be an issue arising from the orders or the results.
- 4.5 Pharmacists shall ensure clinical documentation is maintained as per the AHS Pharmacy Services *Clinical Documentation Policy and Procedure*
- 4.6 The pharmacist shall ensure documentation in the patient's **health record** of the following:
- a) the new medication order, and
- b) the assessment, rationale and plan for the patient, to support the adapting/prescribing performed.
- 4.7 All orders shall be either written in the patient's health record or entered directly into the patient's electronic health record (if applicable). If orders are in writing, the pharmacist shall sign the written medication order as the prescriber.

#### DEFINITIONS

**Adapting a prescription** means to

- a) alter the formulation or regimen for a medication that has been prescribed; the dosage may only be altered in relation to a new prescription (unless a pharmacist has been granted additional prescribing authorization), or

- b) substitute another drug for a prescribed medication if the substituted drug is expected to deliver a therapeutic effect that is similar to the therapeutic effect of the prescribed drug,  
or
- c) renew a prescription to dispense a medication to ensure continuity of care.

**Health record** means the Alberta Health Services legal record of the patient's diagnostic, treatment and care information.

**Most responsible health practitioner** means the health practitioner who has responsibility and accountability for the specific treatment/procedure(s) provided to a patient and who is authorized by Alberta Health Services to perform the duties required to fulfill the delivery of such a treatment/procedure(s) within the scope of his/her practice.

**New prescription** means, for the purposes of this policy, any prescription of a medication by a pharmacist that is not included in the definition of adapting a prescription.

## REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - *Clinical Documentation Policy (Pharmacy Services) (#14.02.01)*
  - *Clinical Documentation Procedure (Pharmacy Services) (#14.02.01.01)*
  - *Medical Staff Bylaws*
  - *Medical Staff Rules*
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - *Controlled Drugs and Substance Act (Canada)*
  - *Government Organization Act (Alberta)*
  - *Health Professions Act, Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians Profession Regulation (Alberta)*
  - *Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians (Alberta College of Pharmacists)*

## VERSION HISTORY

Date	Action Taken
November 17, 2016	Revised
<a href="#">Click here to enter a date</a>	Optional: Choose an item