

Professional Notice

To: Pharmacy Practitioners
From: Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
Date: December 21, 2020
Re: Guidance: Pharmacists as Prescribers

The following guidance is being provided to support pharmacists in meeting their professional responsibility to prescribe in the patient's best health interest, including during this public health emergency.

Patient Assessment and Documentation

Patients expect a similar level of engagement with their pharmacist as they experience with their physician or nurse practitioner when they ask a pharmacist to prescribe a medication for them. Patient assessment and documentation of rationale is central to prescribing and the requirement for both is set out in the [*Standards of Practice: Prescribing Drugs*](#). Assessing whether it is appropriate to provide a specific drug to a particular patient, and at that particular time, is the responsibility of the pharmacist. While the Standards do not specify what this will involve for any particular patient, it is expected that, at a minimum, it is more than simply asking the patient which prescription they are requesting and the quantity they require.

Notification of Prescribing to Primary Care Providers

Pharmacists are currently able to use their professional judgment in determining whether a physician or nurse practitioner should be notified when a pharmacist prescribes for a shared patient.

For clarity, this provision is not a waiver. Rather, it allows pharmacists to use their professional judgment in deciding if notification is needed beyond what is communicated by the record of dispensing in the DIS. It is important for a pharmacist to consider the implications for patient safety, the completeness of the patient's medical record and/or the need for specific collaboration when making this determination.

Third-Party Patient Notices Sent to Pharmacist Prescribers

When a pharmacist is the prescriber on record for a prescription, any follow-up on the prescription by third parties, such as Pharmacare or other insurance providers, will be sent to the pharmacist. It is important for pharmacists to ensure that all communications received from third parties relevant to patient care are included as part of the patient record. As communications are directed to pharmacists, and not pharmacies, this is an important practice to ensure that medication-related information is not inadvertently missed.