

## Professional Notice

**To:** Pharmacy Practitioners  
**From:** Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists  
**Date:** December 11, 2019  
**Re:** Position Statement: Adoption of Prescribing Into Routine Pharmacy Practice

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There is growing public recognition that pharmacists play a critical role in the healthcare system. The Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists modernized the [\*Standards of Practice: Prescribing Drugs\*](#) (Prescribing Standards) to enable pharmacists to better meet their patients' health-related needs.

Recognizing that some pharmacists and pharmacies may not yet have adopted prescribing into their routine pharmacy practice, the NSCP Council has established a [position statement](#) to clarify expectations of all pharmacists and pharmacies in supporting patients to access care during this period of transition.

Should you have questions about the Prescribing Standards, please contact [Anne Marentette](#), Pharmacy Practice Manager.

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## Position Statement

### Adoption of Prescribing into Routine Pharmacy Practice

#### Introduction

It is in the public's best health interest to be able to access consistent and predictable care from pharmacies. Prescribing is a means by which a pharmacist can help to resolve a patient's drug-related problem. A pharmacist's reluctance to offer to assess and prescribe as a means to help resolve a patient's drug-related problem could reasonably lead to public uncertainty about the role of a pharmacist. This may undermine the public's confidence in their pharmacist and may result in patients being hesitant to ask for help or going without care.

Pharmacists in Nova Scotia were first granted the authority to prescribe drugs in 2011. At that time, prescribing was considered a new, expanded practice activity. However, prescribing is now part of the daily practice of many pharmacists in solving their patients' drug-related problems.

The Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists (NSCP) [\*Code of Ethics\*](#) *Value V - Responsibility to the Patient* outlines the following responsibilities for pharmacy practitioners:

- Registrants take all reasonable steps to provide appropriate medications and services to their patients. Registrants who are unable to provide prescribed medicines or services to their patients take reasonable steps to ensure patient care is not jeopardized.

- Registrants play a role in assisting patients to navigate the healthcare system, including referring them to other appropriate health care providers, services and community resources.

## Position

The public's health interest is best served when pharmacists use the full extent of their knowledge and skills to resolve their patients' drug-related problems.

- Pharmacists take all reasonable steps to support the patient in resolving their drug-related problem, including through prescribing when it is within their authority.
- When a pharmacist does not feel confident to prescribe, or is otherwise unable to provide a prescribing service, they ensure that the patient's health needs are met by assisting them to access this service from another healthcare provider.