

PHARMACY PRACTICE POLICY

Private Consultation Rooms – Criteria

Effective Date: December 31, 2020

Introduction

Private consultation rooms are places in a pharmacy where pharmacy practitioners and patients can engage in professional activities and have private conversations. Providing an accessible, comfortable, private space, and routinely using it, can significantly impact a patient's willingness to disclose information and ask questions. Having an appropriate space is foundational to a pharmacy practitioner's ability to provide safe, well-informed, patient-centred pharmacy services.

The *Pharmacy Practice Regulations*, s.25 (1) states, "A pharmacy shall contain an area for patient consultation where counselling and the provision of drug information may take place without being overheard by others and which respects the privacy needs of every patient".

Additionally, the *Standards of Practice: General Pharmacy Practice* s.1.1 requires that pharmacists "provide a safe, private and quiet environment to encourage the patient to express any needs, views and concerns" and s.3.1 requires that pharmacists "carry out conversations regarding patients in a manner that cannot be overheard."

The *Pharmacy Practice Regulations* s.21(2) describes the responsibility of the pharmacy manager for the compliance of the pharmacy with the *Pharmacy Act, Regulations and Standards of Practice*.

Purpose

This policy sets out expectations for pharmacy managers to ensure that an appropriate environment is available to enable pharmacy practitioners to meet the requirements of the *Pharmacy Act, Regulations and Standards of Practice*, including to:

- protect patient privacy;
- enable patients to share information freely; and
- provide an environment to facilitate pharmacy practitioners making well-informed and undistracted decisions regarding patients' therapies.

Policy

Pharmacy practitioners will communicate with patients in a manner that respects their privacy, including providing the opportunity for *any communications* involving a patient's personal and/or health information to take place in a separate private consultation room.

Pharmacy managers are expected to ensure that a separate private consultation room that meets the following criteria is available and maintained in the pharmacy. A pharmacy's private consultation room will:

- ensure acoustic and visual privacy for the patient;
- at a minimum, maintain close proximity to the dispensary to allow integration of its use into the routine workflow of the pharmacy, and preferably be adjacent to the dispensary;*
- be comfortably furnished to seat three people (pharmacy staff member, patient and patient's agent);*
- be wheelchair accessible and have sufficient room to maneuver a wheelchair, and for the pharmacist to assess the patient;*
- be equipped to provide for appropriate hand hygiene;¹
- provide for the safety and security of those using the room;
- prevent unauthorized access;
- at a minimum, provide access to the internet and preferably direct access to the pharmacy's electronic patient record; and
- be used only for professional activities.

* In situations in which a pharmacy has more than one room being used for professional services, at least one of them will meet this criteria.

Legislation References

- *Pharmacy Practice Regulations*, s. 25(l)
- *Personal Health Information Act*
- *Standards of Practice: General Pharmacy Practice* S. 1.1
- *Standards of Practice: Prescribing Drugs* S. 3.8.3
- *Standards of Practice: Drug Administration* S 3.7.1
- *Standards of Practice: Testing* S.3.10.3

¹ The Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK state, in their Hand Hygiene policies, that alcohol-based hand rub at a concentration of 70% is the preferred method to decontaminate hands in the healthcare setting when they are not visibly soiled. Both documents along with WHO hand hygiene guidelines state that soap and water should be used if hands are visibly soiled, have been in contact with bodily fluids, or when dealing with actual or suspected diarrheal infections.