

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND  
***PHARMACY BOARD***

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*Member Organization of the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA)*

**January 2011**

## **Policy Regarding the Sale of Diphenhydramine**

### **Background:**

Under the Drug Schedules approved by the Prince Edward Island Pharmacy Board, diphenhydramine is classified as Schedule III. *“Schedule III drugs may present risks to certain populations in self-selection and although available without a prescription, these drugs are to be sold from the self-selection area of the pharmacy which is operated under the direct supervision of the pharmacist.”*

While evidence of abuse of diphenhydramine does not appear to be well documented in this province, there are periodic instances of hospitalization of patients who have overdosed on this product. There are also numerous anecdotal reports from pharmacists of evidence of abuse of diphenhydramine for its mood altering properties.

This policy is an attempt to balance the appropriate availability of diphenhydramine for self-medication with the responsibility to prevent or reduce the incidence of misuse.

### **Policy:**

- 1) Diphenhydramine, as a Schedule III drug, can be sold from the self-selection area of the pharmacy. However, pharmacists should monitor the sales of diphenhydramine from their pharmacy.
- 2) If pharmacists detect evidence of misuse or abuse of diphenhydramine from their pharmacy they should voluntarily restrict that drug to Schedule II status (i.e. no patient self-selection, mandatory direct pharmacist involvement in the sale).
- 3) Pharmacists must not stock diphenhydramine in the self-selection area of the pharmacy in package sizes larger than 30 units, or 100mL for liquid dosage forms.
- 4) Quantities of diphenhydramine larger than 30 units or 100mL of liquid dosage form shall only be dispensed pursuant to a prescription, or pursuant to the authorization of a

pharmacist directly involved in the sale, which is documented in the patient drug profile of the patient to whom the drug is dispensed.

- 5) Pharmacists are encouraged to document instances of known abuse of diphenhydramine in their area and report those instances to the PEI Pharmacy Board.