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

**Policy for Pharmacists Offering Pharmacy Services via the Internet**

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An increasing number of Canadian pharmacies are developing homepages to facilitate the delivery of "on line" pharmacy services.

Regardless of the vehicle (e.g. through on-site interaction with patients, mail-order or electronically) pharmacists must ensure that their professional services are provided in accordance with established standards of practice. Unique features of each mode of service delivery may however, require special applications and adaptations of the standards of practice. In response to questions from the public, pharmacists, other health professionals and government agencies, the Registrars through NAPRA's Inter-provincial Pharmacy Regulatory Committee developed model standards applicable to the delivery of pharmacy services by accredited Canadian pharmacy operations, through the Internet. In developing this document, relevant standards and guidelines in place in various jurisdictions as well as advice from legal counsel were considered.

These model standards were approved by NAPRA Council in November 2001. They will be adopted or adapted according to specific Provincial/Territorial requirements, and implemented on a province-by-province basis.

Canadian pharmacies offering pharmacy services to patients through the Internet must ensure that the on-line aspect of their operation complies with the following practice standards. In addition the pharmacy must comply with all federal and provincial legislation and usual standards and policies imposed in the traditional environment for the practice of pharmacy and or distribution of medication.

1. Minimal information to be displayed on the pharmacy homepage

The home page must clearly show:

- a) That the pharmacy is duly licensed/accredited and by whom (jurisdiction and the pharmacy regulatory authority's name and address). This notice must also advise consumers that if they reside outside of the jurisdiction(s) in which the pharmacy is licensed and a problem arises they may need to contact the pharmacy regulatory authority in the pharmacy's jurisdiction for redress.
- b) The physical location of the pharmacy operation
- c) The pharmacy telephone number including area code, and
- d) The name of the Pharmacist Manager or Pharmacist-in-charge

2. Sale of scheduled drugs

The pharmacist must comply with all established Standards of Practice. For instance, the pharmacist must make an assessment of the patient's need for Schedule II drug products prior to release and be responsible for the decision to sell them. He or she must be readily accessible and available for consultation when Schedule II drug products are ordered. All established standards for the sale of Schedule I drugs must be adhered to, including requirements for the provision of information, counseling and developing a professional relationship with the patient.

2. Prescriptions

The pharmacist can only accept prescriptions if they are ordered verbally or via facsimile transmission by the prescriber, in accordance with provincial or territorial regulations and regulatory authority policies of the jurisdiction in which the pharmacy is located.

In those cases where the prescription is written, the original written form must be received by the pharmacy prior to the release of the drug(s).

4. Advertising

The pharmacy website must be in compliance with federal and provincial regulations regarding the advertising of drugs and pharmacy services.

5. Physician-pharmacist partnerships

It is professional misconduct for pharmacists to enter into agreements with prescribers that would limit the patient's choice of pharmacies, including Internet pharmacy operations.

6. Patient Information

The pharmacist must ensure that safeguards are in place so that patient's personal health information is collected, recorded and used in a manner to protect confidentiality and privacy.

7. Inspections

The Internet pharmacy operation must be available for on-site inspections as part of an accredited pharmacy.

8. Disclaimers

Pharmacists must not attempt to exempt the pharmacy operation or the pharmacists from compliance with the applicable standards of practice and usual professional duties and obligations which a pharmacist owes to the patient, by obtaining releases or disclaimers from the patient.