

POLICY STATEMENT

Pharmacist's Responsibility in Providing Advice About or Selling Alternative Health Products

June 2000

Prince Edward Islanders are increasingly using complementary therapies, including botanical and homeopathic medicines, as an adjunct or alternative to allopathic treatment. Pharmacists commonly offer such medicines for sale and are frequently consulted about the appropriate use of both botanical (plant based remedies) and homeopathic products (extremely small doses of substances aimed at stimulating healing). The following general guidelines are commended to pharmacists providing advice or selling alternative health products:

1. All botanical and homeopathic products distributed to patients should be safe to use in keeping with the pharmacist's obligation to act in the patient's best interest. Safety includes reasonable assurance of freedom from product toxicity as well as not causing harm with respect to ongoing disease states.
2. The pharmacist must have an understanding of the indications for use, possible side effects and expected outcomes of these products, and maintain appropriate references.
3. The pharmacist recognizes the need for intervention and/or when to advise referral to the purchaser's physician for treatment or ongoing management of a disease state, in keeping with the pharmacist's role in identifying, preventing or solving therapeutic problems.