

Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists

Model Regulatory Policy for Temporary Pharmacy Closures due to Pharmacist Absence

Approved by NAPRA Council November 2001

Due to the demand for pharmacists' services and associated pharmacist workforce shortages, there are increasing numbers of situations in which pharmacy owners and managers are unable to employ locum pharmacist staff to enable regular pharmacist staff to take vacation leave or to replace pharmacist staff who are unable to work due to urgent medical problems.

In response to the public safety issues associated with these closures, the Registrars of NAPRA's Inter-provincial Pharmacy Regulatory Committee developed the following model guidelines for pharmacy owners who may need to close the pharmacy temporarily because of the absence of a pharmacist. The guidelines were approved by NAPRA Council in November 2001 and will be adopted or adapted for implementation by Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities according to specific Provincial/Territorial requirements.

"It is permissible for a licensed pharmacy to be closed without surrendering its operating license, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. The pharmacy closure is for a maximum of 14 consecutive days (or other period approved by the Pharmacy Regulatory Authority) each calendar year.
2. Except in emergency situations, the pharmacy manager must obtain the approval of the Pharmacy Regulatory Authority for the closure 30 days prior to the temporary closure start date.
3. All prepared prescription recipients must be contacted to advise of the closure and given the opportunity to obtain their prepared prescriptions prior to the temporary closure start date.
4. Except in emergency situations, notices to the public (using in-store postings and media announcements) must be made at least 30 days prior to the temporary closure start date.
5. Signage must be posted at the store entrance and a telephone answering machine message must be provided, advising the public about the closure, its duration, the location of the nearest licensed pharmacy, and other information to assist with obtaining necessary pharmacy services during the closure period.
6. Arrangements must be made for emergency access to the pharmacy's patient records in accordance with the respective provincial or territorial privacy legislation.
7. In single-pharmacy communities, alternate arrangements must be made with local prescribers or pharmacies in nearby communities."