



Position Statement:

Pharmacy Practitioners' Roles and Responsibilities Regarding Cannabis

Introduction

The Cannabis Act and its regulations came into effect October 17, 2018; providing the legislative framework that controls the distribution, sale, import, export and possession of both medical and recreational cannabis in Canada. Legalization of cannabis has implications for both pharmacy practice through both the medical and recreational use of cannabis. Pharmacists, as medication experts, contribute to the health and well-being of patients, including those who cannabis for either medical or recreational use.

This position statement has been created to provide guidance to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians on their roles and responsibilities regarding cannabis. The position statement is founded in the PEI Code of Ethics and the ethical principles that make up the Code. While pharmacists and technicians were expected to practice to their Code of Ethics before cannabis became legalized in Canada, the environment has become more complex with cannabis being widely available. The PEI College of Pharmacists recognized a need to provide clarity and guidance to members.

Ethical Principles

1. Always put the patient first
2. Provide safe and quality service
3. Act with professionalism and integrity at all times
4. Communicate effectively and Collaborate with Colleagues
5. Maintain Knowledge Skills and Competence

Roles and Responsibilities of Pharmacy Practitioners.

Developing and Maintaining Competence

Pharmacists have an ethical and professional responsibility to ensure they have the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to assess a patient and provide appropriate care, regardless of the medication or condition they are treating. Pharmacists will take reasonable steps to be competent to consider a patient's cannabis use in relation to their current drug therapy and comorbid health conditions. Pharmacists should be well versed in the potential benefits and risks associated with cannabis use and should not recommend or promote the use of smokable or inhaled cannabis for any purpose but should not stigmatize or deny care to individuals who smoke or inhale cannabis.

Patient Centered Drug Therapy Management

Pharmacy professionals are a critical point of contact in the healthcare system and will begin to see an increase in inquiries from patients about cannabis as the use of both medical and recreational cannabis



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becomes normalized. Pharmacy professionals must gather information about cannabis use when inquiring into patients' other non-prescribed drugs and/or substances when taking a health history.

Pharmacy technicians must recognize their scope of practice and refer patients to the pharmacist when questions arise around cannabis. Pharmacists will need to consider any use of cannabis when assessing patients and developing treatment plans to determine any actual or potential drug-related problems and document in the patient record.

Collaboration

Pharmacists should attempt to collaborate with other member of the patient's healthcare team when responding to questions regarding if, and when, cannabis may be appropriated to meet the patient's health need(s), while respecting patient autonomy. While pharmacists cannot authorize cannabis for medical purposes, they can work with the individual and their healthcare team to determine if cannabis should be considered in their treatment plan and refer patients to appropriate healthcare professionals who can provide the necessary authorization.

Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Considerations

Pharmacy professionals are expected to practice in compliance the legislation, the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice within the landscape of both medical and recreational cannabis. Pharmacist have a responsibility to make clinical decisions based on the health interests of the patient and not the commercial interests of the pharmacy. Pharmacy practitioners are cautioned to recognize and avoid business arrangements that place them in a real or perceived conflict of interest. When providing advice to individuals about cannabis or assessing an individual's use of cannabis, pharmacists must focus on the best interest of the individual. Acceptance of, or solicitation of, any reimbursement, remuneration, sponsorship or rewards for referrals from Licensed Provider(s) of cannabis, or any third parties associated with them are inappropriate and considered a breach of the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice and legislation.