

The Island Capsule

PEI College of Pharmacists

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Pharmacist Expanded Scope-Focus on Emergency Prescribing

You are working in a pharmacy on a Saturday night and a patient approaches the counter. They are travelling from the US and have left their medication at home. Does this situation sound familiar? What can you do as a pharmacist to assist this patient?

Pharmacists, as of September 2014, have the authority to prescribe in an emergency. The question that many pharmacists have is: what is considered an emergency? What are the criteria that would allow me to provide an emergency prescription?

MISSION

Regulating the practice of pharmacy in the province so as to promote a high standard and safeguard the welfare of the public with regard to pharmaceutical service.

Pharmacists may give an emergency prescription for a drug, other than a monitored drug (i.e. narcotic, controlled or targeted) if:

- The pharmacist is satisfied that there is an immediate need for the drug therapy;
- The pharmacist is satisfied that it is not reasonably possible for the patient to see another health care professional in a timely manner (i.e. Physician, Nurse Practitioner);
- The pharmacist believes that it is in the best interest of the patient to give the patient a prescription;

As will any service a pharmacist provides, the pharmacist must practice in accordance with the Model Standards of Practice for Canadian Pharmacists and the Code of Ethics. There are also additional conditions that pharmacists must comply with when giving an emergency prescription. **See side bar**

Conditions of an Emergency Prescription

When prescribing for an emergency prescription, pharmacists must only provide a limited or interim supply of a medication- a supply that would safely see the patient home if they were travelling, for example. As a result, an emergency prescription would not be given a refill nor would consecutive emergency prescriptions be given. The pharmacist is also required to notify the patient's home pharmacy that an emergency supply has been provided, ensuring the continuity of care from one health care provider to the next. In addition, the record keeping requirements for patient records applies in the situation of an emergency prescription. Therefore, pharmacists must maintain the notification form as part of the patient record for a period of 10 years.