



## Guidance for Pharmacy Managers When Ending a Patient Relationship

**Approved by Council: May 17, 2022**

**Reviewed and Updated:**

### 1.0 Purpose

The decision to end a pharmacist/patient relationship is a serious one, most often taken because a therapeutic relationship has been compromised and/or there are issues that cannot be resolved which impact on the ability to provide appropriate care to the patient. Pharmacies may have the right to end a relationship with a patient for various reasons. Ending a relationship may occur provided there are valid reasons; sufficient documentation of the reason(s) and the patient is not in immediate need of pharmacy services. This guidance document will assist the pharmacy manager, when a decision has been made to end a patient relationship, in carrying out appropriate steps ensuring clear communication, documentation, and accountability.

### 2.0 Applicability

This guidance document does not apply in circumstances where the patient's care moves to another pharmacy in a planned transfer of services, or when the patient initiate sending a transfer of prescriptions. The decision to end relationship is different from declining to provide products or services for moral or ethical reasons.

### 3.0 Communication

3.1 The Pharmacy Manager should provide written notice of the intention to end care to the patient when possible. The decision should be clearly communicated to the patient while remaining compassionate, supportive, and non-confrontational.

3.2.1 A pharmacy may end a relationship with a patient without providing Written notice if:

3.2.1.1) The patient poses a risk to the pharmacist, pharmacy staff or other patients;

3.2.1.2 the patient fails to respect professional boundaries;

3.2.1.3 the patient commits a criminal offence that, in the opinion of the pharmacist/pharmacy manager, poses a threat to the pharmacy, staff, and other patients of the pharmacy.

3.2 Reasons for ending care should be communicated to the patient, when appropriate, and the statements being made should be concise, factual, and non-argumentative.

3.2.1 Pharmacy managers must ensure that the decision to end care is not related to behaviour by a pharmacist which would be discriminatory under the provisions under the Human Rights Act of Prince Edward Island. Among other things, the Act prohibits discrimination on PEI in the provision of public services on the basis of certain characteristics or grounds, such as age, race, sex and disability.

3.3 Guidance for the patient should be included in the notice and resources provided that the patient can use to find a new pharmacy service.

3.4 The notice should state the date that will become effective, until this date the pharmacy will remain responsible for the patient's pharmaceutical care and medication management needs.

3.5 The notice shall be signed by the pharmacy manager and a copy of the written notice retained by the pharmacy in the patient's file.

3.6 Staff should be made aware that the relationship has ended and who to report to in the case that the patient arrives at the pharmacy when the pharmacy manager is not present.

3.7 The pharmacy manager should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify other care providers within the circle of care that the patient relationship has ended.

#### **4.0 Timing**

4.1 Timing shall be taken into consideration when ending the relationship. Reasonable time shall be given to the patient to transition to a new pharmacy taking into consideration the continuing needs of the patient.

4.1.1 If the pharmacy is the only location in an area, it may take longer to ensure the patient has appropriate care, which may result in a longer notice period prior to ending the relationship.

4.1.2 Alternatively, during the transition period, the patient may utilize a patient advocate who will be charged with picking up the patient's medications or the medications can be delivered. This will allow the patient to still obtain their medications but will not require the patient to come to the pharmacy.

#### **5.0 Documentation**

5.1 It is advised that a letter be provided to the patient which contains the following:

5.1.1 Pharmacist's name.

- 5.1.2 Pharmacy's name, location, and phone number.
- 5.1.3 Date the letter was written.
- 5.1.4 Patient's name and address.
- 5.1.5 Rationale for the decision to end the patient relationship.
- 5.1.6 Date upon which the relationship will be end.
- 5.1.7 Information for the patient regarding where to locate new pharmacy services.
- 5.1.8 Confirmation that their primary practitioner will be notified of the decision to end the relationship at the pharmacy location or suggestion to inform their primary practitioner of the change.
- 5.1.9 Acknowledgement that the patient's prescription and medication information and all other relevant documents will be transferred to the pharmacy of the patient's choice upon the pharmacy receiving notice of consent to do so by the patient.

## **6.0 Revisiting a decision to end a patient relationship**

6.1 A patient relationship can be resumed at any time where both the pharmacy manager and the patient agree that the relationship can resume and any conditions that need to be met prior to the resumption of services.