



The College of
Physicians and Surgeons
of Newfoundland and Labrador

STANDARD OF PRACTICE – DISPENSING OF MEDICATIONS BY PHYSICIANS

Notice to College Members

December 11, 2018

Council of the College recently approved updates to the Standard of Practice “Dispensing of Medications by Physicians.” This document sets out the College’s expectations for physicians who dispense medication under the limited circumstances outlined in the *Medical Act, 2011*.

A copy of this document is attached below and can also be found on the College’s website on the “Standards of Practice and Practice Guidelines” page. **Physicians are expected to be familiar with the standards and guidelines which apply to their individual practices.**

All College communication to its members will be by email.
It is a professional obligation for College members to read all College communications.



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Standard of Practice: Dispensing of Medications by Physicians

A **standard** is the minimum standard of professional behaviour and ethical conduct on a specific issue expected by the College.

Dispensing of Medications by Physicians

Preamble

Dispensing of medications is an important component of medical care delivery which is typically performed by pharmacists. The *Medical Act, 2011* contemplates limited circumstances in which a physician can dispense medications. This Standard of Practice sets out the College's expectations for physicians who dispense medications.

Standard of Practice

This standard of practice is applicable to physicians who dispense medication consistent with Section 78(3) of the *Medical Act, 2011* (the "*Medical Act*").

Approval of the College

Physicians who propose to dispense medications as part of their practices must first obtain the approval of the College. To be approved, a physician must establish that the "services of a pharmacist are not readily available" to the satisfaction of the College.

Physicians can dispense medications in emergency situations without prior approval from the College. Physicians who dispense medications under such circumstances must report to the College as soon as practicable on the circumstances surrounding the dispensing of medication without prior approval.

Dispensing Standards

Physicians who dispense medications must employ dispensing standards of practice equal to those required of pharmacists. Applicable standards of practice are available from the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board. These standards include, but are not limited to:

1. methods of procurement;
2. labeling of medication;
3. dispensing of medication;

4. maintaining records;
5. supplying necessary patient information regarding the proper use of a medication;
6. maintaining security for medication inventories; and
7. disposal of medications that are unfit to be dispensed.

These standards recognize and address the potential for harm to patients from poor dispensing practices and are consistent with patient safety initiatives and the need for medication information management standards.

Fees and charges

Physicians may charge for the cost of medication plus a reasonable professional fee for dispensing.

Medication Samples

This standard of practice does **not** apply to physicians who may, from time to time, provide manufacturer's samples at no cost to patients as part of his/her practice.

As detailed in the College's Standard of Practice on Prescribing, the College's expectations regarding assessment, diagnosis, duration, informed consent, and monitoring remain applicable in circumstances where a physician provides a patient with a medication sample. In the event that a medication sample is provided, the physician must document the date provided, name of the medication, medication strength, quantity or duration of therapy, and instructions for use.

Acknowledgements

CPSO (2011). Policy Statement, Dispensing Drugs.

CPBC (2016). Practice Standard, Sale and Dispensing of Drugs by Physicians.

Document History

Approved by Council	December 8, 2018
Reviewed & Updated	
Expected Review Date	December 8, 2023