



Nova Scotia
College of
Pharmacists

Governing the practice of pharmacy in Nova Scotia in the interest of the health and well being of the public

Professional Memorandum

To: Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians, and Pharmacy Managers

From: The Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists

Date: July 8, 2014

Re: Pharmacy Practice Management Systems: Requirements to Support NAPRA's "Model Standards of Practice for Canadian Pharmacists"

Introduction

Pharmacy practice has evolved - it now focuses on patient care rather than on just the dispensing of a drug. Patient care is not based on a single transaction or episode, but on multiple interactions with a patient over longer periods of time, and each time a patient accesses pharmacy care, an assessment of the patient and previous health records is required.

Computer software systems used by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians should support the delivery of quality patient care. Historically, pharmacy computer systems have been designed by software vendors to support dispensing and billing processes. They have generally not been effective in enabling and facilitating the recording, storage and exchange of information used by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in emerging patient care roles. A common national direction focused on patient care has never been provided to software vendors to ensure that pharmacy computer systems are able to support pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to effectively and efficiently fulfill their professional requirements - responsibilities that go far beyond dispensing a drug.

Purpose

In an effort to ensure that the pharmacy computer software systems used by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians adequately support them as they provide care to their patients, the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) developed a document called "Pharmacy Practice Management Systems: Requirements to Support NAPRA's Model Standards of Practice for Canadian Pharmacists".

The purpose of this document is to instruct pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, pharmacy managers, pharmacy owners and pharmacy software vendors, as well as the developers of provincial electronic health information systems, on the minimum functionality required by pharmacy computer software systems used in pharmacy practice (referred to as pharmacy practice management systems or PPMS) in order for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to be able to comply with their respective standards of practice. The requirements are intended to direct the development and implementation of pharmacy practice management systems (PPMS) that support pharmacies in effectively and efficiently achieving the standards of practice when providing expanded services to their patients and therefore should be read by anyone involved in purchasing, implementing or using pharmacy systems. They will come into effect across Canada on January 1, 2016.

The document includes requirements for such things as:

- the accurate identification of prescribers and PPMS system users
- acceptable uses of PPMS software
- user access control and logout
- the termination of PPMS access privileges
- patient choice
- tracking patient progress and lab test ordering by pharmacists
- e-prescription authenticity
- prescription indications
- secure transmission of prescriptions
- secure prescription data storage
- remote access
- information management arrangements
- documentation
- confidentiality agreements for IT service support

Note that the requirements are not intended to repeat or replace existing privacy rules in the province (i.e., those found in the Pharmacy Act, PIPEDA or PHIA); rather they complement, and in some cases augment, existing rules associated with patient privacy and preserving the confidentiality and integrity of personal health information.

The requirements found in the PPMS document should be considered the minimum requirements for a PPMS. The vendor software purchased for a pharmacy (either on its own or in combination with other software, systems and services) must therefore meet all the requirements and be able to perform all the functions listed in the document before it can be considered compliant and suitable for implementation. Note that the provincial pharmacy regulatory authorities will not be recommending or involved in the conformance testing of software. Organizations such as Canada Health Infoway currently provide pre-implementation certification testing for drug information systems. Note also that the four pharmacy software vendors currently in use by all pharmacies in Nova Scotia (Kroll, Telus, McKesson and Shoppers Drug Mart) are aware of these requirements.

As the practice of pharmacy evolves to address the requirements of a health care system straining to meet the health needs of a growing and aging population, it is critical that the tools of pharmacy practice, and in particular the PPMS, keep pace with the practice changes so that pharmacy professionals are appropriately supported as they provide optimal patient care.

The PPMS document is posted on the NSCP website under Standards of Practice and can be found at: [http://www.napra.org/Content_Files/Files/NAPRA Pharmacy Practice Management Systems November2013.pdf](http://www.napra.org/Content_Files/Files/NAPRA_Pharmacy_Practice_Management_Systems_November2013.pdf) . A printed copy is being distributed to every community pharmacy via the pharmacy manager.

Please feel free to contact the NSCP office should you have questions.