July 27, 2015

Dear Colleague:

**Re: Title Protection for Pharmacy Technicians**

When the new *Pharmacy Act* became effective several years ago, it provided the authority for the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists to register, license and regulate a brand new class of registrant and health care professional – the pharmacy technician.

Working in collaboration with the pharmacist, pharmacy technicians assume responsibility for the more technical and administrative functions related to pharmacy practice including: gathering of patient information; product preparation; receiving, filling and checking of prescriptions; provision of technical drug and device information; quality assurance activities; and inventory control. To become licensed, they need to meet rigorous entry to practice requirements including being educated through a nationally accredited pharmacy technician education program, satisfying structured practice experience requirements and passing the nationally administered PEBC examinations. Once licensed, pharmacy technicians are required to maintain their skills through ongoing continuing education. They must practice in accordance with standards of practice and a code of ethics and are legally responsible and held accountable for their work through the NSCP’s complaints and discipline processes.

Through regulation, the NSCP and the public can be assured that pharmacy technicians have met national and provincial entry to practice standards and are competent to take on more responsibility than pharmacy assistants and other dispensary personnel for the technical aspects of dispensing. Pharmacists, freed from these tasks, will be more accessible to patients and will be able to focus on enhanced patient care.

In addition to creating the pharmacy technician as a new class of registrant, the *Pharmacy Act* also provides title protection for pharmacy technicians. Section 65(3) of the Act states that no person who does not hold a valid licence as a pharmacy technicians pursuant to this Act shall assume or use the title of pharmacy technician, registered pharmacy technician, regulated pharmacy technician, pharmacy technologist, dispensary technician, dispensary technologist or words of like import, the designation RPhT, RPT, PharmTech, or similar abbreviation or any other words or abbreviations to imply that the person is a licensed pharmacy technician under the *Pharmacy Act*. **This means that the use of any of the terms above by someone who is not registered and licensed with the NSCP as a pharmacy technician is contrary to the provincial legislation.**
Patients recognize health professional titles because they indicate a degree of competence and fitness to practise. These titles tell the public that they can be confident in the healthcare professional’s knowledge and skills. Individuals inappropriately using protected titles are actually passing themselves off to the public as being registered – this poses a risk to public safety. Therefore, in the interest of public safety and the public’s confidence in the pharmacy profession, it is critical that the title “pharmacy technician” only be used by those who are registered with and regulated by the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists.