

POLICY CATEGORY: Governing the Membership: Registration Licensure & Renewal  
POLICY FOCUS:  
POLICY NAME: NAPRA Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice  
POLICY NUMBER: GM-RLR-15  
LAST UPDATED: Affirmed at Council meeting December 5, 2016  
MOTION NUMBER: C-16-12-05  
OTHER: Motion

# Professional COMPETENCIES for Canadian

## PHARMACY TECHNICIANS

### at Entry to Practice



National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities  
Association nationale des organismes de réglementation de la pharmacie

Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice

*Approved by the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities' (NAPRA) Board of Directors November 2013,  
published March 2014.*

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## Introduction

### Background

The National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) is a not-for-profit organization established in 1995 and represents all provincial and territorial pharmacy licensing authorities whose mandate is the protection of the public. NAPRA's membership also extends beyond traditional geographic borders to include the Canadian Forces Pharmacy Services. One of the fundamental goals of the organization is to enable members to take a national approach in addressing common issues.

This document describes the entry-to-practice competency requirements for pharmacy technicians across Canada. It is a foundational document that enables a national approach to the formalization of the pharmacy technician profession and facilitates labour mobility. The document on professional competencies at entry to practice exists to guide the development of educational outcomes, educational program accreditation standards and national competency assessment examinations. As a secondary goal, this document also provides pharmacy technician students, pharmacy technicians and the public with information on the expected competencies of a pharmacy technician at entry to practice. A regular review of the professional competencies for pharmacy technicians at entry to practice is essential in supporting optimal regulatory practices across Canada in order to enhance patient care and public protection. Due to the significant changes to the pharmacy technician profession currently underway across the country, it was determined that the entry-to-practice competencies should be updated at this time.

This document was developed concurrently with the document on competencies for pharmacists at entry to practice. Both documents were reviewed in parallel with a view of updating the competencies where necessary to better support the role of both health professionals and to ensure that the terminology in both documents is appropriate and consistent. The project was undertaken with the generous support of funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (previously known as Human Resource and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)).

Competencies are often described as significant job related knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and judgments required for competent performance by members of a profession <sup>(xv)</sup>. They provide an overview of what a pharmacy technician at entry to practice is able to do rather than *how* a pharmacy technician is expected to perform tasks. Detailed information on how to perform tasks is normally found in the standards of practice. At the national level, the expected standards of practice can be found in the most recent version of the *Model Standards of Practice for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians*.

This document outlines the competencies required of pharmacy technicians at entry to practice in Canada, keeping in mind changes expected in the next few years due to the ongoing progression of the profession. It is expected that as pharmacy technicians progress through the various stages of their career, these competencies will be further developed and new ones gained.

### Approach

The document on professional competencies for pharmacy technicians at entry to practice was first prepared in 2007. This is the second version of the document, which takes into consideration the evolution of the profession across the country.

A specific approach was adopted to undertake the review of this document. NAPRA's National Advisory Committee on Pharmacy Practice (NACPP) was assigned the task of steering the review.

With the support of a consulting firm, the first step in the review consisted of conducting a scan of current practices in competency profile development as well as a review of emerging trends for the profession. Both Canadian and international competency and standards profiles for pharmacists (12), pharmacy technicians (4) and other health professions (17) were reviewed. Results suggested that NAPRA's existing document on professional competencies at entry to practice was already well-aligned with other national and international competency profiles in terms of the language, structure and categories used to describe practice. The emerging trends identified suggested a need for the document to better reflect the shift in practice toward the pharmacy technician providing more assistance to the pharmacist in areas other than drug distribution, such as history taking and information gathering, so that the pharmacist can more effectively provide clinical, patient-focused services. These trends were confirmed with a group of individuals from a variety of pharmacy organizations during two (2) focus groups sessions.

An evaluation of the types of competency frameworks used to describe the competency categories, units and elements was also conducted. Results suggested that the current function-based framework with some elements of a client-based framework was accepted by most stakeholders and worked well for a more task oriented profession such as pharmacy technicians. This information, coupled with the fact that members felt strongly that the same framework should be kept for both professions, led NACPP to support a function-based framework with some elements of a client-based framework for this review of both the pharmacy technician and pharmacist competencies.

The emerging trends identified then served, among other things, to enrich the discussion during a three (3) day workshop attended by a wide range of pharmacy organizations, as well as practicing pharmacy technicians and pharmacists from across the country. A revised document was produced in response to the workshop, and then amended based on the results of both internal and external consultations with a wide range of pharmacy technician stakeholders, including those most likely to use the document: educators and examiners. The final document was approved by the NAPRA Board of Directors on November 2, 2013. It is NAPRA's intent that the document be reviewed on a cyclical basis, approximately every five (5) years.

Although a function-based framework was maintained, the terminology used to denote the competency units and elements has changed. In this document, competency units are now referred to as key competencies and competency elements are now referred to as enabling competencies. Enabling competencies are the sub elements to the key competencies.

### **Professional Practice**

The pharmacy technician profession has changed significantly in recent years. The regulation of pharmacy technicians in certain provinces led to an expanded scope of practice in those jurisdictions, and these trends are expected to continue in the next few years in other parts of the country. Pharmacy technicians use their knowledge and skills to undertake their expanded scope of practice which allows activities such as transcribing verbal orders, transferring prescriptions, and checking the technical aspects of a prescription. Although the scope of practice of the Canadian pharmacy technician may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the core competencies expected of pharmacy technicians must be consistent nationally in order to facilitate labour mobility. However, it is expected that despite having the competencies necessary to perform a task, pharmacy technicians will only do so when allowed in their jurisdiction.

The pharmacy technician may work in a variety of different practice settings, but always works very closely with the pharmacist in order to achieve optimal drug therapy outcomes for the patient. Having the two groups, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, working in the same pharmacy environment increases the importance of clearly describing their respective roles. In general, the pharmacy technician focuses on the technical aspects of the prescription, the gathering of patient information for the pharmacist to review, product preparation, product distribution and inventory control; while the pharmacist manages the overall pharmacy environment and as a drug therapy expert, provides leadership in drug therapy decision-making and focuses on the clinical aspect of direct patient care. Both groups assume responsibility for their own actions, are accountable to the public and contribute to the overall functioning of the pharmacy to ensure a safe and healthy environment.

## Overarching Concepts

The following list of overarching concepts has guided the review of the professional competencies at entry to practice for both groups and must be considered when reading the entire document.

### Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacists:

- 1) Use a patient-centred care focus on the patient's needs, values, and safety to optimize patient outcomes.
- 2) Practise in accordance with their jurisdiction's legislation, professional standards, by-laws, guidelines and/or policies.
- 3) Are committed to life-long learning.
- 4) Act as mentors to promote the growth and development of the profession.
- 5) Collaborate with each other and members of the health care team and broader circle of care.
- 6) Use critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills appropriate to their role.
- 7) Take responsibility for their decisions and provide leadership as appropriate.
- 8) Possess pharmacy-specific knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes to support their scope of practice.
- 9) Hold the patient's health and safety as a priority at all times.

## Glossary

- 1) **Care Plan:** a detailed document outlining the pharmacist's and the patient's activities and responsibilities, completed by the pharmacist, with the input and participation of the patient, designed to 1) resolve any drug therapy problems and relevant health related or drug related needs, 2) successfully achieve the health goals of the patient; and 3) prevent any potential drug therapy problems. A care plan can also be developed collaboratively with other members of the patient's circle of care. (Adapted from reference iii)
- 2) **Circle of care:** a term of reference used to describe all members of the health care team who have direct responsibilities of providing care to a patient. This team is dynamic, as the specific individuals providing care to a patient will change throughout a patient's care in response to the patient's changing health needs. (Adapted from references xi and xii)
- 3) **Close call:** an event that could have resulted in unwanted consequences, but did not because either by chance or through timely intervention the event did not reach the patient; also known as a near miss. (ix)
- 4) **Drug:** any substance or mixture of substances manufactured, sold or represented for use in:
  - a) the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of a disease, disorder or abnormal physical state, or its symptoms, in human beings or animals,
  - b) restoring, correcting or modifying organic functions in human beings or animals, or
  - c) disinfection in premises in which food is manufactured, prepared or kept. (viii)
- 5) **Drug-related need:** those health needs of a patient which have some relationship to drug therapy and for which the pharmacist is able to offer professional assistance, expressed by the patient in terms of their understanding, concerns, expectations, or behaviours about drug therapy and translated by the pharmacist as the absence or presence of drug therapy problems. (Adapted from reference iv)
- 6) **Drug therapy problem:** an undesirable event experienced by a patient that involves, or is suspected to involve, drug therapy, and that interferes with achieving the desired goals of therapy and requires professional judgment to resolve. There are seven possible classifications of drug therapy problems.
  - a) The drug therapy is unnecessary because the patient does not have a clinical indication at this time.
  - b) Additional drug therapy is required to treat or prevent a medical condition in the patient.
  - c) The drug product is not being effective at producing the desired response in the patient.
  - d) The dosage is too low to produce the desired response in the patient.
  - e) The drug is causing an adverse reaction in the patient.
  - f) The dosage is too high, resulting in undesirable effects experienced by the patient.
  - g) The patient is not able or willing to take the drug therapy as intended. (iii)
- 7) **Enabling competencies:** the sub-elements or main ingredients to achieving the key competencies. (Adapted from reference v)
- 8) **Health promotion:** the process of enabling patients to increase control over, and to improve their health. It not only embraces actions directed at strengthening the skills and capabilities of individual patients, but also action directed towards changing social, environmental, political and economic conditions so as to alleviate their impact on public and individual health. (xiv)

- 9) High-alert drug:** a drug that bears a heightened risk of causing significant patient harm when it is used in error. <sup>(ix)</sup>
- 10) Independent double check:** a process in which a second authorized individual conducts a verification. Such verification can be performed in the presence or absence of the first authorized individual. In either case, the most critical aspect is to maximize the independence of the double check by ensuring that the first authorized individual does not communicate what he or she expects the second authorized individual to see, which would create bias and reduce the visibility of an error. <sup>(Adapted from references ix, xii)</sup>
- 11) Key competencies:** the important outcome objectives (i.e. what is to be achieved or performed).
- 12) Medication incident:** any preventable event that may cause or lead to inappropriate drug use or patient harm while the drug is in the control of the health professional, patient, or consumer. Medication incidents may be related to professional practice, drug products, procedures, and systems, and include prescribing, order communication, product labelling/packaging/nomenclature, compounding, dispensing, distribution, administration, education, monitoring, and use. <sup>(ix)</sup>
- 13) Medication reconciliation:** a formal process in which the pharmacy technician supports the pharmacist to work together with the patient and other health professionals to ensure accurate and comprehensive medication information is communicated consistently across transitions of care. Medication reconciliation requires a systematic and comprehensive review of what the patient is actually taking which is then compared against the prescriber's orders, particularly upon admission, discharge or transfer of care. The goals of medication reconciliation are the provision and maintenance of an accurate and current record of what medication a patient is taking (known as a Best Possible Medication History), correction of discrepancies between physician orders and what is being taken and prevention of adverse events and potential patient harm. <sup>(Adapted from references ix, xiii)</sup>
- 14) Patient:** any person or authorized agent of the person who is provided a product and/or service that is within the practice of pharmacy. <sup>(Adapted from references x, xi, xii)</sup>
- 15) Patient record:** a record that contains patient demographics, profile of products provided, and other patient-specific information regarding care that is needed and/or provided. A patient record may include information such as name and contact information, third party insurance, allergies, intolerances, previous adverse effects, details of current and past drug regimens, current medical conditions, past medical history, immunization records, laboratory results, and care plans. <sup>(Adapted from reference xii)</sup>
- 16) Prescription:** an order given by a practitioner directing that a stated amount of any drug or mixture of drugs specified therein be dispensed for the person named in the order. <sup>(vii)</sup> For the purposes of this document, a prescription includes drug orders, refers to both new and refill prescriptions, and may be for Schedule II or III drugs in some jurisdictions.
- 17) Product:** any drug or health product purchased commercially from a manufacturer or prepared in a pharmacy. Products may include point-of-care home monitoring devices, drug delivery devices, supplies, and medical equipment. <sup>(Adapted from reference xi)</sup>

## Competency Categories

The following competency categories are presented in no specific order of importance; all categories are considered important.

### 1. Ethical, Legal and Professional Responsibilities

*Pharmacy technicians practise within legal requirements, demonstrate professionalism and uphold professional standards of practice, codes of ethics and policies.*

### 2. Patient Care

*Pharmacy technicians participate in meeting the patient's health and drug-related needs, through collaboration with the patient, the pharmacist and other health professionals, to achieve the patient's health goals.*

### 3. Product Distribution

*Pharmacy technicians implement safe and effective product distribution to ensure the safety and accuracy of released products.*

### 4. Practice Setting

*Pharmacy technicians contribute to the management of the practice setting with the goal of ensuring safe, effective and efficient product distribution.*

### 5. Health Promotion

*Pharmacy technicians support health promotion activities for patients, communities and populations in collaboration with the pharmacist.*

### 6. Knowledge and Research Application

*Pharmacy technicians access, retrieve and apply relevant information to make evidence-informed decisions within their practice with the goal of ensuring safe and effective product distribution.*

### 7. Communication and Education

*Pharmacy technicians communicate effectively with patients, the pharmacy team, other health professionals and the public, providing education when required.*

### 8. Intra and Inter-Professional Collaboration

*Pharmacy technicians work in collaboration with the pharmacy team and other health professionals to support the delivery of comprehensive services, make best use of resources and ensure continuity of care in order to achieve the patient's health goals.*

### 9. Quality and Safety

*Pharmacy technicians collaborate in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, procedures and activities that promote quality and safety.*

## Competencies

### 1. Ethical, Legal and Professional Responsibilities

*Pharmacy technicians practise within legal requirements, demonstrate professionalism and uphold professional standards of practice, codes of ethics and policies.*

#### Key Competencies

Pharmacy technicians are able to:

- 1.1 Practise within legal requirements.
- 1.2 Uphold ethical principles.
- 1.3 Manage actual and potential illegal, unethical, or unprofessional actions or situations in practice.
- 1.4 Apply principles of professionalism.
- 1.5 Document activities of practice in compliance with federal and provincial/territorial legislation, standards and policies.

#### Enabling Competencies

##### 1.1 Practise within legal requirements.

- 1.1.1 Apply legal requirements to practice, including federal and provincial/territorial legislation, policies, by-laws, and standards.
- 1.1.2 Apply federal and provincial/territorial workplace, occupational health and safety, and other related legislation to the practice setting.
- 1.1.3 Apply federal and provincial/territorial privacy legislation to the collection, use, storage, disclosure and destruction of personal health information.

##### 1.2 Uphold ethical principles.

- 1.2.1 Apply the principles of professional codes of ethics.
- 1.2.2 Apply ethical principles in the decision-making process.

##### 1.3 Manage actual and potential illegal, unethical, or unprofessional actions or situations in practice.

- 1.3.1 Identify illegal, unethical or unprofessional actions or situations.
- 1.3.2 Undertake appropriate intervention to address illegal, unethical or unprofessional actions or situations.

**1.4 Apply principles of professionalism.**

- 1.4.1 Apply principles of self-regulation.
- 1.4.2 Accept responsibility and accountability for own actions and decisions.
- 1.4.3 Seek guidance when uncertain about own knowledge, skills, abilities, and scope of practice.
- 1.4.4 Apply principles of continuing professional development including assessing own learning needs and developing a plan to meet these needs.
- 1.4.5 Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- 1.4.6 Protect the privacy and confidentiality of the patient.
- 1.4.7 Manage situations of actual and perceived conflict of interest.
- 1.4.8 Describe the Canadian health care system and the role of health professionals within it.

**1.5 Document activities of practice in compliance with federal and provincial/territorial legislation, standards and policies.**

- 1.5.1 Maintain complete, accurate and secure patient records.
- 1.5.2 Identify situations in which documentation should and should not be shared with other health professionals or third parties.
- 1.5.3 Select appropriate methods to share documentation within the circle of care and facilitate patient care.

## 2. Patient Care

*Pharmacy technicians participate in meeting the patient's health and drug-related needs, through collaboration with the patient, the pharmacist and other health professionals, to achieve the patient's health goals.*

### **Key Competencies**

*Pharmacy technicians are able to:*

- 2.1 Develop a professional relationship with the patient.
- 2.2 Obtain patient information for pharmacist review.
- 2.3 Collaborate with the pharmacist to support care plan activities.

### **Enabling Competencies**

#### **2.1 Develop a professional relationship with the patient.**

- 2.1.1 Establish and maintain rapport by using effective communication skills.
- 2.1.2 Demonstrate a caring, empathetic, and professional attitude.
- 2.1.3 Determine and acknowledge the patient's needs, values and desired level of care.
- 2.1.4 Identify and respect the roles and responsibilities of each party in the relationship.

#### **2.2 Obtain patient information for pharmacist review.**

- 2.2.1 Gather information from the patient using appropriate interview techniques, including active listening.
- 2.2.2 Identify factors such as culture, language, demographic and physical characteristics that may impact the patient's care.
- 2.2.3 Gather information from the patient's health records.
- 2.2.4 Gather information required for medication reconciliation.
- 2.2.5 Measure the patient's physical parameters such as height, weight and blood pressure.
- 2.2.6 Organize, reconcile and record the patient's information.

**2.3 Collaborate with the pharmacist to support care plan activities.**

- 2.3.1 Identify patient needs related to issues such as dosage forms, special packaging or labelling.
- 2.3.2 Assist the patient in making informed decisions regarding the selection and use of drug administration devices, monitoring devices and health aids.
- 2.3.3 Gather monitoring parameter information for pharmacist review, including adherence information and lab test results.
- 2.3.4 Communicate relevant information and identified concerns to the pharmacist in a clear, concise and timely manner.

### 3. Product Distribution

*Pharmacy technicians implement safe and effective product distribution to ensure the safety and accuracy of released products.*

#### **Key Competencies**

*Pharmacy technicians are able to:*

- 3.1 Receive, interpret and process a prescription.
- 3.2 Prepare products for dispensing.
- 3.3 Prepare and compound non-sterile and sterile products according to recognized guidelines and standards of practice.
- 3.4 Verify the technical aspects of the prescription to ensure accuracy and quality of products.
- 3.5 Collaborate with the pharmacist in the release of the product.

#### **Enabling Competencies**

##### **3.1 Receive, interpret and process a prescription.**

- 3.1.1 Determine the validity, clarity, completeness and authenticity of the prescription and resolve concerns in collaboration with the pharmacist.
- 3.1.2 Transcribe verbal orders and ensure their accuracy.
- 3.1.3 Transfer a prescription and receive a transferred prescription.
- 3.1.4 Interpret numerals, symbols, measurement systems and Latin abbreviations.
- 3.1.5 Perform pharmaceutical calculations.
- 3.1.6 Identify patterns of unusual drug prescribing and usage including possible diversion or drug misuse and report relevant findings to the pharmacist or appropriate authority.
- 3.1.7 Process the adjudication for payment of prescriptions and other pharmacy services using knowledge of third-party payer policies and formularies.

##### **3.2 Prepare products for dispensing.**

- 3.2.1 Select appropriate products by applying knowledge of brand and generic names, dosages, and dosage forms.
- 3.2.2 Apply drug interchangeability principles in accordance with applicable formularies, policies or legislation.

- 3.2.3 Verify the integrity of a product by considering stability, and, where applicable, sterility, including checking expiry dates, physical appearance, and odour.
  - 3.2.4 Measure products by counting, pouring or weighing using the appropriate equipment and technology.
  - 3.2.5 Package products in a suitable container to maintain product integrity, stability, and, where applicable, sterility.
  - 3.2.6 Use packaging that is safe and appropriate for the patient, including pre-packaging, multi-dose or unit dose packaging and child-resistant vials.
  - 3.2.7 Label products according to legislative requirements, best safety practices, established protocols and patient-specific needs.
- 3.3 Prepare and compound non-sterile and sterile products according to recognized guidelines and standards of practice.**
- 3.3.1 Perform compounding calculations.
  - 3.3.2 Prepare and compound sterile products according to recognized guidelines and standards of practice.
  - 3.3.3 Prepare and compound non-sterile products according to recognized guidelines and standards of practice.
- 3.4 Verify the technical aspects of the prescription to ensure accuracy and quality of products.**
- 3.4.1 Identify when an independent double check should be performed.
  - 3.4.2 Check the product and its prescription label against the prescription using a systematic approach.
- 3.5 Collaborate with the pharmacist in the release of the product.**
- 3.5.1 Determine whether the legal and professional requirements for a product to be released to the patient have been met.
  - 3.5.2 Identify when the patient requires further consultation or education from the pharmacist.

## 4. Practice Setting

*Pharmacy technicians contribute to the management of the practice setting with the goal of ensuring safe, effective and efficient product distribution.*

### **Key Competencies**

*Pharmacy technicians are able to:*

- 4.1 Optimize the safety, efficacy and efficiency of operations in the practice setting.
- 4.2 Contribute to the management of pharmacy inventory to ensure safe, effective and efficient product distribution.
- 4.3 Contribute to the management of record keeping activities within the practice setting.

### **Enabling Competencies**

#### **4.1 Optimize the safety, efficacy and efficiency of operations in the practice setting.**

- 4.1.1 Demonstrate the organizational and time management skills necessary to effectively prioritize, organize and manage product distribution workflow.
- 4.1.2 Supervise pharmacy support personnel so that accepted standards are met.
- 4.1.3 Use and maintain automation and other technology to enhance safety, efficacy and efficiency in the practice setting.

#### **4.2 Contribute to the management of pharmacy inventory to ensure safe, effective and efficient product distribution.**

- 4.2.1 Apply inventory and formulary management systems and strategies that incorporate best practices, including new technologies.
- 4.2.2 Prepare and place orders for stock and supplies, using appropriate technology, from licensed and legitimate sources.
- 4.2.3 Identify issues with the drug supply chain, including drug shortages and drug recalls, and collaborate with the pharmacist to resolve these issues.
- 4.2.4 Return or properly dispose of recalled, expired and unusable products.
- 4.2.5 Reconcile inventory for controlled substances, or any other substances selected.
- 4.2.6 Investigate inventory discrepancies and communicate findings to the pharmacist and/or other appropriate authority.

**4.3 Contribute to the management of record keeping activities within the practice setting.**

- 4.3.1 Use appropriate information technology to organize, maintain and retrieve pharmacy records.
- 4.3.2 Use information technology and record-keeping procedures that maintain the integrity, security and permanence of pharmacy records.

## 5. Health Promotion

*Pharmacy technicians support health promotion activities for patients, communities and populations in collaboration with the pharmacist.*

### **Key Competencies**

*Pharmacy technicians are able to:*

- 5.1 Support patient-specific health promotion activities in collaboration with the pharmacist.
- 5.2 Support public health activities in collaboration with the pharmacist.
- 5.3 Contribute to the maintenance of a healthy environment for the public.

### **Enabling Competencies**

#### **5.1 Support patient-specific health promotion activities in collaboration with the pharmacist.**

- 5.1.1 Identify and inform the pharmacist of socio-economic, cultural, environmental and other factors that are barriers to, or facilitators of, health and wellness for the patient.
- 5.1.2 Gather health promotion information relevant to the patient.
- 5.1.3 Participate in health promotion activities in collaboration with the pharmacist.
- 5.1.4 Facilitate the patient's access to and interaction with support agencies and health services within the healthcare system.

#### **5.2 Support public health activities in collaboration with the pharmacist.**

- 5.2.1 Identify factors that are barriers to, or facilitators of, public health and wellness.
- 5.2.2 Participate in public health initiatives in collaboration with the pharmacist.
- 5.2.3 Participate in organized initiatives for disaster, pandemic and emergency preparedness.

#### **5.3 Contribute to the maintenance of a healthy environment for the public.**

- 5.3.1 Promote the proper handling and disposal of drugs and hazardous materials with the patient, self and others.
- 5.3.2 Identify and minimize the risk of disease transmission from the pharmacy environment.

## 6. Knowledge and Research Application

*Pharmacy technicians access, retrieve and apply relevant information to make evidence-informed decisions within their practice with the goal of ensuring safe and effective product distribution.*

### **Key Competencies**

*Pharmacy technicians are able to:*

- 6.1 Respond to questions that do not require pharmacist referral using appropriate strategies.
- 6.2 Apply relevant information to practice.

### **Enabling Competencies**

#### **6.1 Respond to questions that do not require pharmacist referral using appropriate strategies.**

- 6.1.1 Clarify requests for information to identify questions that require pharmacist referral.
- 6.1.2 Use a variety of retrieval techniques to access reliable and appropriate information, including evidence-based information when possible.
- 6.1.3 Organize and provide information using strategies appropriate to the target audience.

#### **6.2 Apply relevant information to practice.**

- 6.2.1 Gather new information, including evidence-based information when possible, that may be applicable to practice.
- 6.2.2 Evaluate the information and use current, relevant and reliable information to improve practice.

## 7. Communication and Education

*Pharmacy technicians communicate effectively with patients, the pharmacy team, other health professionals and the public, providing education when required.*

### **Key Competencies**

*Pharmacy technicians are able to:*

- 7.1 Establish and maintain effective communication skills.
- 7.2 Use safe, effective and consistent communication systems.

### **Enabling Competencies**

#### **7.1 Establish and maintain effective communication skills.**

- 7.1.1 Demonstrate proficiency in written and verbal English or French.
- 7.1.2 Demonstrate appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills, including listening skills.
- 7.1.3 Demonstrate appropriate interview techniques.
- 7.1.4 Select appropriate communication and education techniques for use with the patient and other health professionals.
- 7.1.5 Conduct interpersonal interactions, including conflict management, in a professional manner.
- 7.1.6 Communicate with sensitivity, respect and empathy.

#### **7.2 Use safe, effective and consistent communication systems.**

- 7.2.1 Use communication techniques that maximize safety and understanding, including repeating back verbal orders, using recognized terminology and avoiding unnecessary or unsafe abbreviations.
- 7.2.2 Record and store information in a consistent manner for efficient access and retrieval by relevant personnel.
- 7.2.3 Select appropriate technology to facilitate communication.

## 8. Intra and Inter-Professional Collaboration

*Pharmacy technicians work in collaboration with the pharmacy team and other health professionals to support the delivery of comprehensive services, make best use of resources and ensure continuity of care in order to achieve the patient's health goals.*

### **Key Competencies**

*Pharmacy technicians are able to:*

- 8.1 Create and maintain collaborative professional relationships.
- 8.2 Contribute to the effectiveness of working relationships in collaborative teams.
- 8.3 Participate in the delivery of collaborative health services in collaboration with the pharmacist.
- 8.4 Accept referrals from and make referrals to the pharmacist.

### **Enabling Competencies**

#### **8.1 Create and maintain collaborative professional relationships.**

- 8.1.1 Identify potential collaborators with whom to initiate ongoing professional relationships.
- 8.1.2 Collaborate with other parties in the relationship to define the roles and responsibilities of each party.

#### **8.2 Contribute to the effectiveness of working relationships in collaborative teams.**

- 8.2.1 Interact respectfully with other members of the team by accepting accountability for themselves and managing disagreements and conflict.
- 8.2.2 Share decision-making activities with other members of the team.

#### **8.3 Participate in the delivery of collaborative health services in collaboration with the pharmacist.**

- 8.3.1 Collaborate with team members to ensure appropriate utilization of resources.
- 8.3.2 Collaborate with team members to determine and achieve team goals and objectives.
- 8.3.3 Facilitate continuity of care.

#### **8.4 Accept referrals from and make referrals to the pharmacist.**

- 8.4.1 Recognize situations that fall beyond the scope of practice of pharmacy technicians and refer these situations to the pharmacist.
- 8.4.2 Accept responsibility for referrals from the pharmacist.

## 9. Quality and Safety

*Pharmacy technicians collaborate in developing, implementing and evaluating policies, procedures and activities that promote quality and safety.*

### **Key Competencies**

*Pharmacy technicians are able to:*

- 9.1 Contribute to a culture of patient safety.
- 9.2 Contribute to continuous quality improvement and risk management activities related to the drug distribution system.
- 9.3 Ensure the quality, safety and integrity of products.
- 9.4 Create and maintain a working environment that promotes safety.

### **Enabling Competencies**

#### **9.1 Contribute to a culture of patient safety.**

- 9.1.1 Apply principles of patient safety to improve practice.
- 9.1.2 Employ best practices when informing the patient of the occurrence of a medication incident.
- 9.1.3 Share information about problems, resolutions, system changes and lessons learned with the workplace team.

#### **9.2 Contribute to continuous quality improvement and risk management activities related to the drug distribution system.**

- 9.2.1 Apply principles of continuous quality improvement to practice.
- 9.2.2 Apply principles of risk management to practice by anticipating, recognizing and managing situations that place the patient at risk.
- 9.2.3 Identify the occurrence of a medication incident or close call and respond effectively to mitigate harm and prevent reoccurrence.
- 9.2.4 Identify high-alert drugs and high-risk processes in order to respond effectively.

**9.3 Ensure the quality, safety and integrity of products.**

- 9.3.1 Maintain the cleanliness, functionality and integrity of compounding, packaging, dispensing, and storage equipment.
- 9.3.2 Ensure that products are stored and transported under the conditions required to maintain product quality, safety and integrity, including cold chain management.
- 9.3.3 Evaluate the quality of supplies and products using recognized quality assurance techniques including visual inspection, verification of the legitimacy of the supplier and use of manufacturers' quality markers.

**9.4 Create and maintain a working environment that promotes safety.**

- 9.4.1 Minimize and manage distractions in the work environment.
- 9.4.2 Manage factors that affect personal wellness including work-life balance, sleep deprivation and physical and emotional health.
- 9.4.3 Identify factors that impact the safety of the working environment, including resource allocation, procedural consistency and ergonomics.
- 9.4.4 Handle hazardous products safely by minimizing personal exposure and reducing environmental contamination.

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