



Thursday, April 22, 2010

Honourable George Abbott
Minister of Health
PO Box 9050
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Mr. Abbott;

On behalf of the BC College of Family Physicians (a Chapter of the College of Family Physicians of Canada) and its over 2770 BC members, I wish to highlight concerns regarding the proposed changes to the scope of pharmacists' practice. You have already heard from our partner organizations, the College of Physicians & Surgeons of BC and the BCMA, each of whom has also raised practical concerns.

The BC College of Family Physicians supports models of practice that includes increased roles for inter-professional team members to help improve access, efficiency and effectiveness of care. In its October 2007 Vision Statement, the College of Family Physicians of Canada emphasized its support for collaborative relationships in which nurse, pharmacists, and others work together in family practice or primary care settings.

However, family physicians are expressing concerns about the expansion of health care roles that may impact safety and continuity of care. Family physicians play a key role as custodians of the patient's longitudinal health record. The importance of this latter role has recently been highlighted (CMAJ 2008 179: 987-988) but family physicians have concerns about the unremunerated costs to them in maintaining this key repository and health system resource, which will be generated by pharmacists reporting of changes.

Expanded prescribing rights for pharmacists must also be subject to the same legal and ethical guidelines that oversee physician prescribing. Pharmacists should not be in a position to profit by being allowed to both prescribe and dispense medications within the same business. Neither should they be able to alter scheduling of prescriptions in a manner to drive income.

The family physicians of BC look forward to revisions to the previous proposals and anticipate that safe, efficient care for patients with improved collaborative practice will result.

With regards,

Shamim Jetha
President
BC College of Family Physicians