

Notice from the Executive Officer

March 23, 2011

Expanding Professional Pharmacy Services for April 1, 2011

On June 7, 2010, Minister Deb Matthews announced the Ontario government's intent to invest \$100 Million to pay for expanded pharmacy professional services, in addition to the \$50 Million that is already invested in the MedsCheck program.

In August, 2010 I advised you of the establishment of a special working group, the Expanding Professional Pharmacy Services Working Group (EPPS) that would provide recommendations to the ministry on value added pharmacist professional services that could be implemented in the short term. The EPPS working group was comprised of community pharmacists from across Ontario with the mandate to identify services that could be quickly implemented within the current scope of practice for pharmacists.

In September 2010, the ministry announced a further expansion of the MedsCheck program to include residents of Long-Term Care homes, persons living with diabetes and patients at home who are unable to go to a pharmacy for their medication review. Since that announcement, pharmacists have steadily increased their participation in the delivery of these new services.

EPPS Working Group Recommendations:

Dr. Lisa Dolovich, the Chair of the EPPS working group, submitted the group's final report on October 8, 2010. The working group identified a number of services that could be quickly implemented and funded. Ten services were highlighted as higher priority for implementation. These include:

1. Pharmaceutical Opinion for Medication Interventions [may include resolution of dispensing issues or formulary coverage if the intervention is clinically related e.g., review of prior drug history]
2. Refusal to Fill / Dispense in cases where the prescribed treatment may not be appropriate based on information available at the pharmacy
3. Chronic Disease Medication Assessment and Management Service for Hypertension, Asthma, Diabetes and Hypercholesterolemia
4. Medication Reconciliation after hospital discharge
5. Smoking Cessation Service
6. Comprehensive Medication Assessment Service (ongoing medication management including disease management, monitoring, care plans and evaluation)
7. Prescription Follow-Up Consultation (when medication is achieving desired response)
8. Medication Adherence Follow-Up (including pharmacist review of repeat prescriptions)
9. Home Diagnostic Device Training
10. Over The Counter Medication Consultation

Expanded Programs and Implementation:

On the advice of the EPPS, I am pleased to advise that the implementation of the first stage of expanded services, will be available April 1, 2011 to Ontario Drug Benefit recipients.

To facilitate the implementation and communication of the programs, the recommendations by the EPPS have been grouped based on similar functions/activities and will be implemented in two stages.

Bundling the services minimizes the need to differentiate each individual service. For example, refusing to dispense a medication may be an outcome of a pharmaceutical opinion work-up by the pharmacist and should be considered one service versus two separate activities. This will also simplify the administrative reporting necessary for pharmacists to bill for the service.

Phase 1: Prescription/dispensing services: implementation April 1, 2011

- clinical services that would likely occur at the time of dispensing
- interventions are more focused on the medication that is being dispensed
- services include: pharmaceutical opinion (consultation with prescriber e.g., potential adverse reaction, or duplication of therapy), refusing to fill a prescription, follow-up consultation with patient to ensure medication is working as intended and verifying medication compliance

Phase 2: Professional appointment based services: planned implementation for fall 2011

- clinical services that align with and build upon the MedsCheck program and the first stage of expanded services by providing a more thorough review of a patient's medication therapy
- chronic disease management programs
- medication reconciliation and assessment of therapy for chronic medications
- planned implementation following discussions with the Ontario Pharmacy Council on the implementation.

Funding professional services will support optimal drug therapy for Ontarians while minimizing potential adverse events and medication errors. The programs enable the pharmacist to create and maintain a complete and accurate record of a patient's medication history, support interprofessional collaboration and reinforce the role of the pharmacist within the health care team. This initiative also supports the ministry's narcotic strategy and sets the foundation for future expanded scope of practice for pharmacists.

Additional information on the first stage of expanded services will be available in the very near future as a separate communiqué and on the ministry website.

Proposed Regulatory Amendment to Extend the Transition Fee Period for Pharmacies

As part of the changes to Ontario's drug system last summer, a \$75M transition fund was created to support pharmacies to adapt to the changes within the drug system. Transition fees are provided to pharmacies in form of an additional \$1 payment until March 31, 2011.

The ministry is proposing to make a regulatory amendment to extend the period for the \$1 transition fee for pharmacies from April 1, 2011 to June 30, 2011. The transition fee will gradually decrease to \$0.65 on July 1, 2011, \$0.35 on April 1, 2012; \$0 as of April 1, 2013 as pharmacies begins to offer more professional services. The proposal will be posted on the Ontario Regulatory Registry website for public comment until April 21, 2011.