

Introducing the *Meds Check* Program



## Introduction

The Ontario Government fundamentally believes in the role of pharmacists as part of an integrated team that provides an enhanced level of care for patients. The *Transparent Drug System for Patients Act (TDSPA)*, passed in the Ontario Legislature in June, 2006, includes a landmark decision to recognize the valuable role of pharmacists by compensating them for providing professional services to Ontarians.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, collaboratively with the Ontario Pharmacy Council and the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, is pleased to launch these **professional services as eligible benefits** under the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, **beginning April 1st, 2007**.

The services, intended to promote better patient health outcomes, will be phased in over the coming months: Phase 1 compensates for medication review programs; and Phase 2 compensates for more in-depth medication consultation services.

### PHASE 1: *Meds Check* Medication Review Program

Through one-on-one interactions, community pharmacists may provide their patients with a medication review service to help them better understand their medication therapy and ensure that medications are being taken as prescribed. *Meds Check* is a service provided by community pharmacists, with the goal of maximizing patient adherence to drug therapy.

- ◆ The Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program will pay pharmacies \$50.00 to provide a medication review service to ODB-eligible recipients that are taking three or more chronic prescription medications. The medication review must be conducted by the pharmacist as a one-on-one interview between patient and pharmacist in order to qualify for payment through the ODB.
- ◆ The results of the medication review, including a comprehensive medication list and recommended action, will be shared with the patient/caregiver and, when appropriate, with their physician and/or primary healthcare provider.
- ◆ Any resulting recommendation for change in therapy remains at the discretion of the patient's doctor.
- ◆ The Ontario College of Pharmacists defines in its Standards of Practice, the expected functions of a pharmacist specifically with respect to the dispensing of medications. These functions are to be part of every pharmacist's daily activities and are considered compensated for by the usual and customary dispensing fee. This program is not intended to compensate pharmacists for these functions. In order for the service to qualify for payment, the process outlined must be followed in a one-on-one interview with the patient.

#### Who Is Eligible?

To qualify for a *Meds Check* medication review, a patient must be:

- ◆ A beneficiary of the Ontario Drug Benefit Program; and
- ◆ Currently taking a minimum of three chronic prescription medications.

#### The service is:

- ◆ Voluntary, meaning patients can choose to participate
- ◆ Free of charge to eligible patients
- ◆ Available on an annual basis
- ◆ Available to community-based patients (patients residing in long-term care facilities are not eligible for this service)

### Which Eligible Patients Would Most Benefit?

Typically, patients who have several chronic medical conditions and are taking multiple medications are at a higher risk for medication-related problems.

Based on the above eligibility criteria, the following patients may benefit most from a *Meds Check* medication review:

1. Patients who may be having trouble managing their medication, or who have a history of non-compliance.
2. Patients who have had significant changes made to their regimen in the past 100 days.
3. Patients on “high alert” medications, such as warfarin, digoxin and opiates.
4. Patients who have recently been discharged from hospital.

Physicians and other healthcare providers may also refer patients to you for this service.

### Inside This Guide

This quick reference will provide you with a step-by-step outline of the *Meds Check* program, along with tips, suggested resources, and documentation and billing procedures. Please note that the Practice Tools included on the back page of this guide are provided as suggestions only—you may choose to use your own tools or other tools developed by other organizations.

### PHASE 2: Medication Consultation Service

**Phase 2** is a more in-depth *medication consultation service*. Designed to address more complex medication-related issues, the goal of this service will be to collaborate with other healthcare providers to optimize patient drug therapy regimens.

As part of Phase 2, the ministry will expand to include other sectors of pharmacy practice (i.e. long-term care and hospital outpatient) in compensating for medication consultation services.

**A separate guide will be published describing the medication consultation program.**



# Meds Check Medication Review Process

Patients benefit best from medications when they take the right medicines at the right dose and at the right time.

The *Meds Check* medication review is a voluntary service that provides an opportunity for pharmacists to interact one-on-one with patients, helping them to identify and resolve common medication-related issues in order to get the most benefit from their medication.

During this review, your patients will have an opportunity to meet with you, one-on-one, to learn more about their medications. As part of this service, you will:

- ◆ Help them to understand drug names, strengths, adverse effects and usage instructions.
- ◆ Ensure that they are taking their medications as their doctor has directed.
- ◆ Provide your patients with an accurate and complete medication list that they may take with them when they visit their physician, other healthcare providers, or if they go to hospital.

## 1. Identify Eligible Patients

To get started, identify eligible patients based on the criteria outlined on page 2. You can do this by reviewing your patient prescription profiles and contacting the patient by phone, or by approaching him or her in your pharmacy.

*The following key messages may be helpful when introducing the Meds Check service to your patients:*

- ◆ The service is voluntary and free of charge.
- ◆ The service will help you to get the most from your medications and allow you to ask questions or discuss any concerns you may have.
- ◆ It will only take 20-30 minutes of your time.
- ◆ An appointment can be scheduled for a time that is convenient to you.

If the patient agrees, schedule an appointment. Please allow sufficient time so you can talk with the patient uninterrupted.

### TIPS

Ask your patient if they have already had this service from another pharmacy. If they have had a *Meds Check* medication review from another pharmacy within the past year, they are not eligible under the ODB Program to receive another review. Note the date of their last review and consider contacting them one year from that date.

To help prepare for a more meaningful interview, you may ask the patient to complete a short questionnaire or screening tool.

**Refer to the *Suggested Practice Tools* section found at the back of this guide for some suggestions.**



Remind the patient to bring:

- ◆ Their medication containers
- ◆ Medication containers from other pharmacies
- ◆ Over-the counter drugs, vitamins and herbal remedies they are taking

Encourage their caregiver to come along, if appropriate.

## 2. Interview Patient

### Preparing for the Medication Review

Prepare a list of the medications dispensed at your pharmacy.

### Conducting the Medication Review

Confirm that the patient understands the voluntary nature of the service and agrees to the interview before beginning. This is important since you will be collecting personal, lifestyle and health information from your patient.

*Summarize the goals of the interview with the patient and/or caregiver. Explain that you will:*

- ◆ Verify any allergies and chronic medical conditions, as well as the patient's overall health status.
- ◆ Review and discuss the proper use of all medications, including non-prescription products, vitamins and natural products.
- ◆ Attempt to resolve any medication-related problems you may discover, consulting with the patient's doctor, if necessary.

- ◆ Provide tips/additional information on how to obtain the best results from medication.
- ◆ Provide an up-to-date and accurate medication list. Explain to the patient the importance of taking this list with them when they visit their doctor or go to hospital.

#### TIP

**Ensure you meet with your patient in an “acoustically private” area of the pharmacy away from other customers – preferably where there is a desk and computer.**

### Review Medications

Review all medications (including over-the-counter medications and natural products) with the patient to ensure they are being taken properly. Identify and try to resolve any problems the patient may be having in managing their medication regimen.

### Prepare Medication List

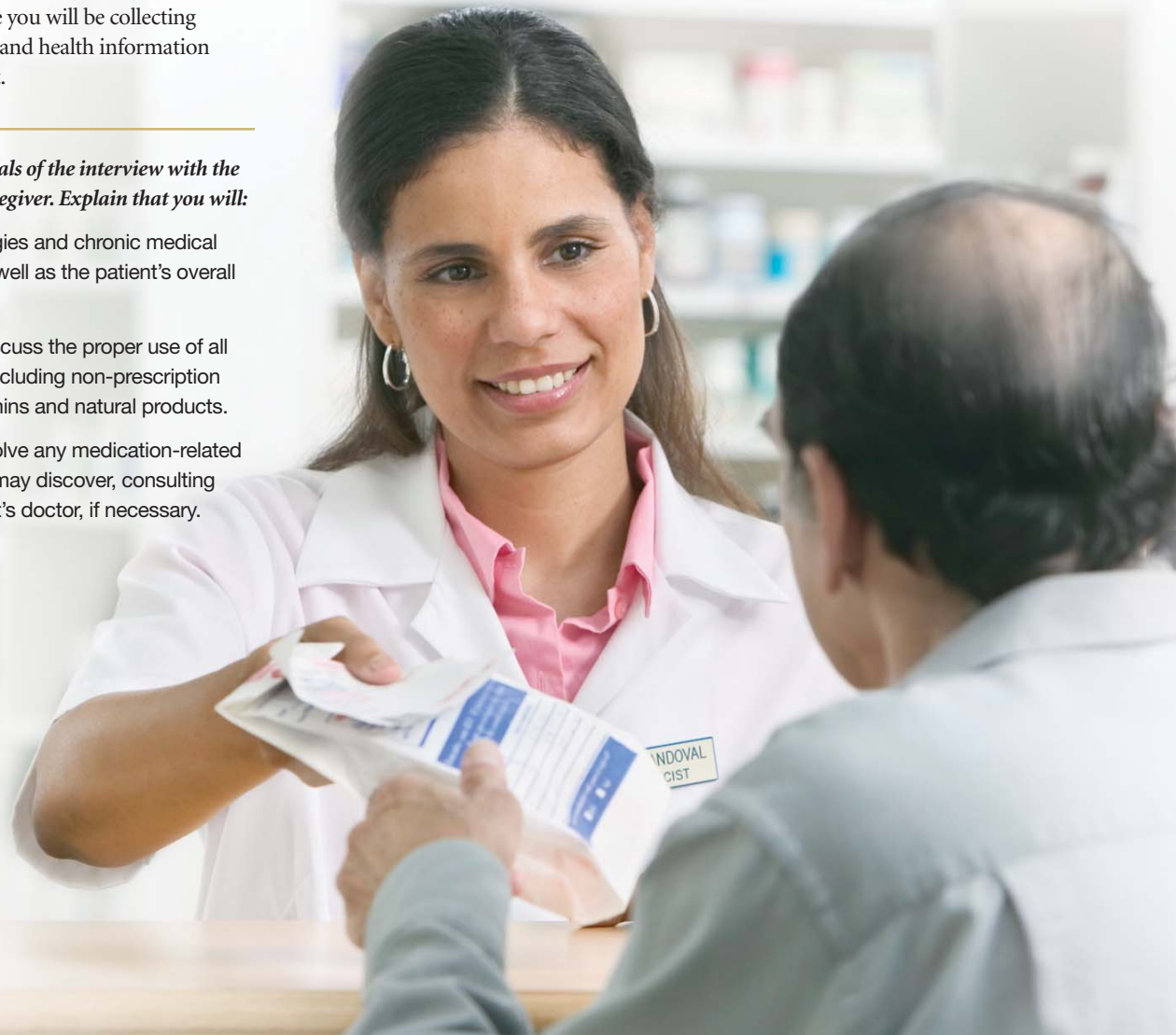
Prepare an accurate medication list (including any over-the-counter medications or natural products the patient may be taking) to accompany your recommendations. Have the patient sign it to indicate that they have received the *Meds Check* service from you, and provide them with a copy. Encourage the patient to bring the list with them whenever they return to the pharmacy, visit another healthcare provider, or go to hospital.

### Claim for Payment

If, based on your professional judgement, no significant problems have been discovered, you may make a claim for payment after completing the *Meds Check* medication review and providing the patient with their medication list—along with any recommendations (refer to the *Claim for Payment* section on page 6 for more information).

### Follow-up with Patient

If necessary, indicate to the patient that you will be following up with them by telephone.



### 3. Assess and Follow-up

You may decide you need to do further research and assessment. Review the information gathered in your interview. If necessary, gather more information (from patient's doctor or caregiver, for example). Compare the list of medications that the patient is taking to the medication prescribed by their physician(s). Identify any issues and use your professional judgement to decide how they can be resolved.

#### Some examples:

- ♦ Many of the issues may be straightforward and require relatively little time and no further information to address. For example, if the concern is a packaging issue, you may simply resolve the patient's concern immediately by changing a bottle top, for example.
- ♦ If the issue is the patient forgetting to take their medication, and the dosage taken is appropriate, you may determine that an adherence tool (i.e. multiple dose package) would help. Follow-up with the patient to discuss this option and implement if appropriate.
- ♦ During the *Meds Check* medication review, you may uncover significant medication-related problems that require further patient assessment and more time to conduct a more comprehensive medication consultation—or you may need to consult with the patient's doctor. You can phone the physician, or if the situation is not urgent, put your findings/concerns in a letter/fax/email.

#### TIP

**The Ontario College of Pharmacists has developed a framework and sample forms for conducting medication reviews, as well as comprehensive medication consultations. Refer to the *Suggested Practice Tools* page at the back of this guide for references.**

Once you have resolved any issues, a follow-up discussion with the patient may be necessary. This can be done over the telephone or in person, if appropriate.

You may need to provide the patient with a revised medication list and, in some cases, forward a copy to their physician.

If you send the patient's medication list to his or her doctor, be sure to clearly explain to the physician your purpose for doing so. For example, indicate whether the list is for information/record purposes only. Or, do you need the physician to address a specific concern?

#### IMPORTANT

It is important to promote the value of your professional services. Take a few moments in the follow-up to review with the patient what services you provided and any follow-up plan. Be sure to reinforce key recommendations.

Remind the patient of the importance of keeping their medication list up-to-date at all times. They should bring it with them each time they visit the pharmacy or their doctor. And, if possible, they should ask you to update the list and take it with them any time they are admitted to hospital.

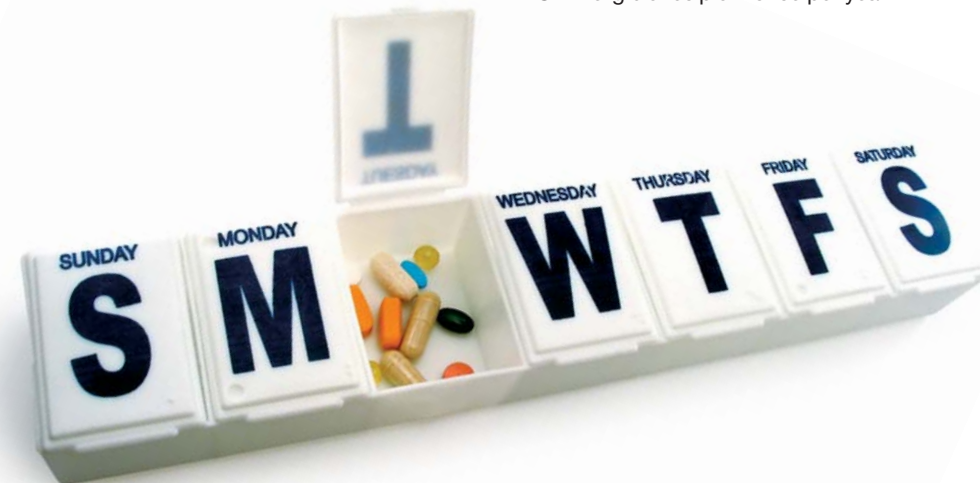
### 4. Document the Service



It is important to clearly document all patient interactions to support payment for the *Meds Check* medication review

service. For example, you must keep a copy of the medication list signed by the patient.

Many pharmacy software systems have the ability to document patient interactions. Alternatively, a paper-based system may also be used. All information should be in a readily retrievable format. A paper-based system must cross reference the claim transaction number.



### 5. Claim for Payment

A claim for payment may only be made once a *Meds Check* medication review has taken place, and the patient has been provided with a complete medication list.

1. The claim submission follows the normal process for submitting claims on the Health Network System using the following information:
  - ♦ Product Identification Number (PIN) is 93899979
  - ♦ the intervention code "PS" will be required
  - ♦ the Pharmacist's ID code must be included with the claim.
2. The amount paid is \$50.00.
3. A claim may only be submitted for an ODB-eligible recipient once per year.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**As a licensed pharmacist, do I need to register or sign up to provide and be paid for this service?**

Provided that you are practicing in a pharmacy that is registered as a provider with the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, you may provide and claim for this service.

**Am I required to provide this service? What if I do not wish to participate?**

You are not obligated to provide this service.

**Can my pharmacy technician conduct a medication review?**

A medication review must be conducted by a licensed pharmacist. A pharmacy intern may conduct the review at the discretion of the pharmacist in charge.

**How long should a review take?**

Time required will vary from patient to patient; it is estimated that the interview portion will take approximately 20-30 minutes.

**I've just conducted a *Meds Check* medication review and it took longer than 30 minutes. Can I bill for the extra time?**

No, the ministry is compensating a flat rate of \$50.00 for this service.

**How often can I conduct a *Meds Check* medication review for a patient?**

Patients are eligible for one *Meds Check* medication review annually.

**How do I determine whether a patient has already had a medication review conducted at another pharmacy?**

Prior to initiating a review, it is important to ask the patient whether or not they have participated in this service at another pharmacy in the past year.

**Where do I get tools, forms, etc.?**

The *Suggested Practice Tools* section found at the back of this guide provides suggestions. Alternatively, you may use other tools or forms that you may prefer, or you may create your own.

**Do I have to send the patient's medication list to his/her doctor?**

No, it is not required, although you may identify situations in which you feel it is beneficial to do so. Be sure to let the patient know your intentions, and explain to the doctor your reason for providing the list.

**I've just completed a review and I've decided that this patient needs a much more in-depth consultation to resolve problems. What do I do?**

Utilize your professional judgment to determine whether to conduct a comprehensive medication consultation or to refer the patient back to his or her physician.

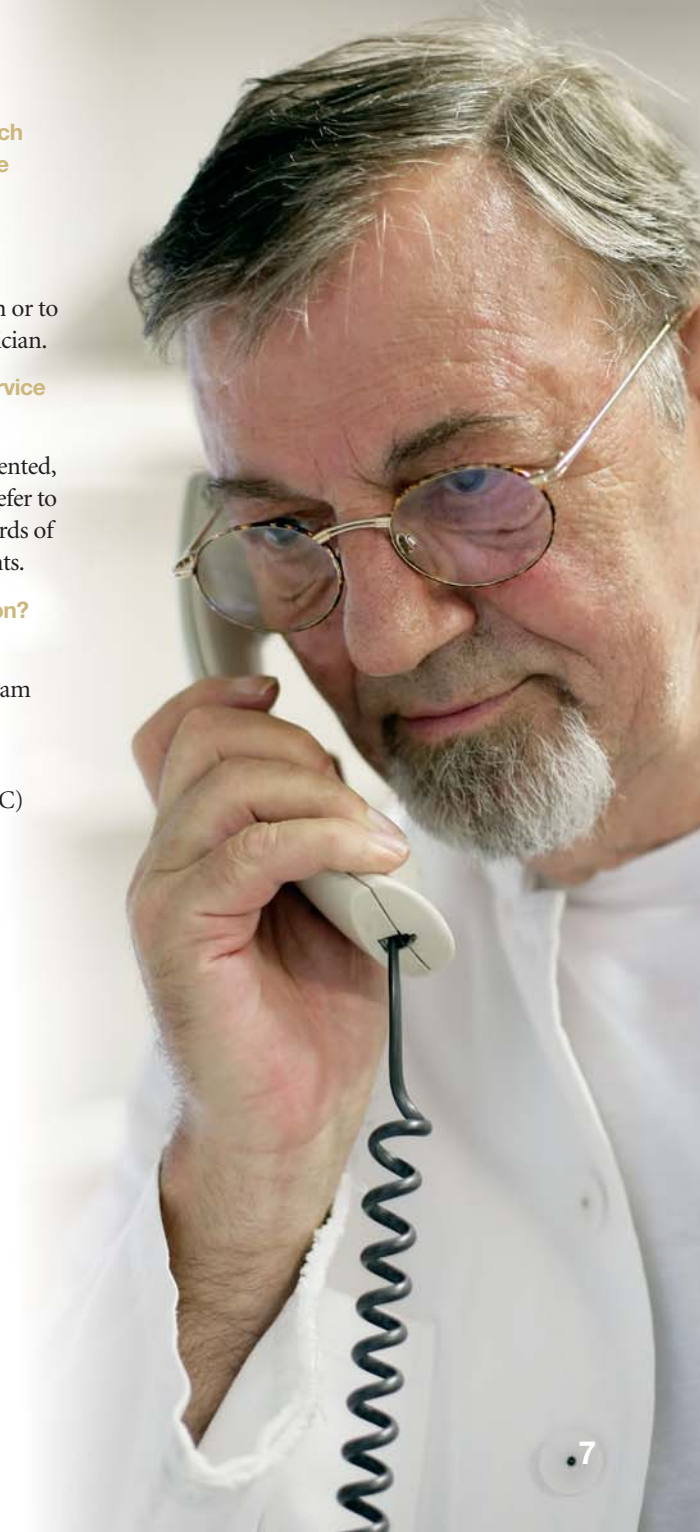
**How much documentation of this service is required?**

All patient interactions must be documented, either in paper form or on computer. Refer to Ontario College of Pharmacists' Standards of Practice for documentation requirements.

**Who do I contact for more information?**

For information on the claims process, contact the Ontario Drug Benefit Program Help Desk at 1-800-668-6641.

For clinical support, contact the Drug Information and Research Centre (DIRC) at 1-800-268-8058.



## Suggested Practice Tools

### Ontario College of Pharmacists ([www.ocpinfo.com](http://www.ocpinfo.com))

- ♦ *Best Possible Medication History Guidelines for Medication Reconciliation*
- ♦ *Framework to Support Comprehensive Medication Consultation Services*

Sample forms are included with both references.

### Ontario Pharmacists' Association Drug Information and Research Centre (DIRC) ([www.dirc.ca](http://www.dirc.ca))

- ♦ Clinical and practice support available through DIRC at 1-800-268-8058.
- ♦ Forms and protocols available at [www.OntarioRph.ca](http://www.OntarioRph.ca)

### Canadian Pharmacists Association ([www.pharmacists.ca](http://www.pharmacists.ca))

- ♦ *PharmaCheck*®  
([www.pharmacists.ca/pharmacheck](http://www.pharmacists.ca/pharmacheck))

The *PharmaCheck* program provides pharmacists with the tools to do an initial assessment of medication adherence and to quickly identify and resolve common drug-related issues in older adults or patients taking chronic medications. Available for download for CPhA members free of charge, non-member charge is \$25.00.

To view this guide online, please visit [www.health.gov.on.ca](http://www.health.gov.on.ca)