

The Transition Times

HELPING YOU NAVIGATE CHANGE

Psst...

Pharmacists are patient-focused, accessible, skilled health professionals—their medication management expertise results in better health outcomes.

That fact may be one of the best kept secrets in the province.

How do we get the word out?

Simply by giving the same clear messages repeatedly. ACP is introducing a new communication plan with four key messages to cut through the confusion and create clarity around the new practice framework for pharmacists. But before we dive into the new, let's look at how we got to this point.

You are working in a time of incredible change. The public perception that pharmacists simply "count pills and tell me how to take my meds" is no longer true (if it ever was).

The who, what, when, where, and how of pharmacy is changing.

Who - Pharmacists are working with interdependent teams, such as Primary Care Networks. At the same time pharmacists' roles are changing, other health care professionals are redefining their roles, and systems for delivering care are changing. The "status quo" doesn't cut it any more.

What - On April 1, Alberta became the first province in North America to authorize pharmacist prescribing—and that's only one way pharmacist practice has evolved in recent years. Pharmacists now host clinics, offer lifestyle counseling, screen for diseases, and educate patients about a variety of health issues. Some focus their practices in fields such as mental health, intravenous nutrition support, or oncology.

When - Pharmacist care is now more accessible to Albertans than ever. Home medication delivery and counseling, extended community pharmacy hours, classroom and institution information services, palliative care, and specialty clinics confirm that pharmacists are there when Albertans need them.

Where - Pharmacists are moving from the back of the dispensary to work in patient counseling rooms, home health care facilities, managed care facilities, military settings, the public health service, health policy development, government, association management, consultant services, pharmaceutical sales and marketing, drug research and development, universities and numerous other settings.

How - Access to lab values, electronic health records, online documentation and notification systems, and other technological advances have forever altered the way pharmacists work.

Technology is also changing patient expectations. As Albertans learn more through the Internet and global media, they are demanding more of pharmacists.

The why of pharmacy is NOT changing

The reason that you offer safe, effective, responsible care remains unchanged. You work interdependently with patients, physicians and other health care professionals to optimize medication management to produce positive health outcomes for patients.

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When are the changes going to stop so I can just get on with my work?

Patients are changing.

The system is changing.

The tools are changing.

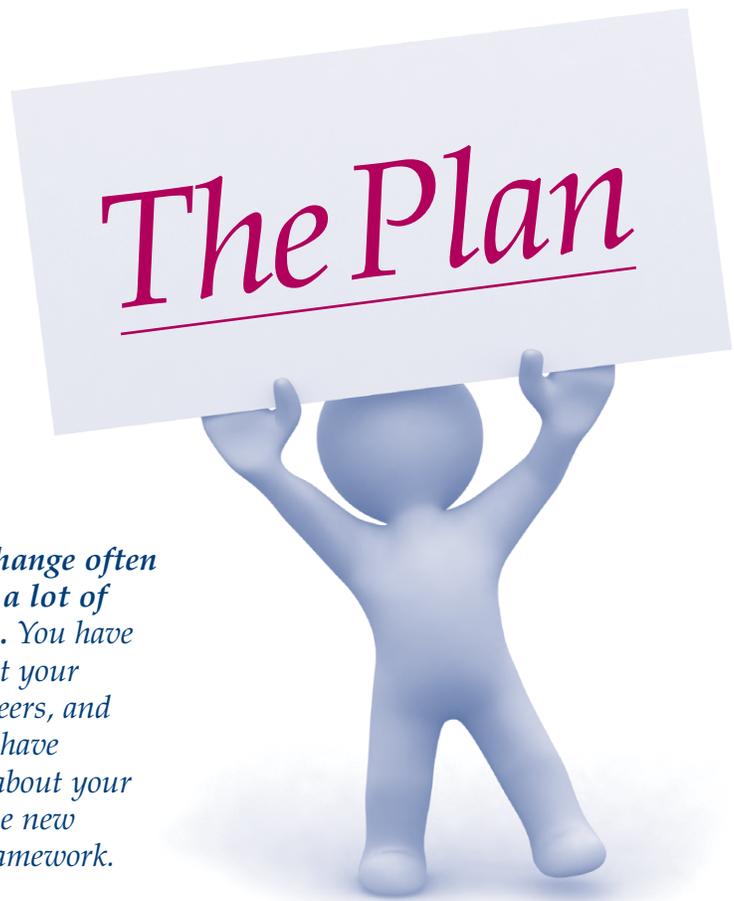
These changes will not stop.

How can pharmacist practice remain the same?

To keep pace, the healthcare system must mobilize all its resources for the maximum benefit of patients. This means that you are being called on to practice to your full potential.

The new legislation and standards are designed to offer patients better drug therapy and greater access to health care, while allowing you to realize your professional potential by fully using your training and expertise.

By fully using your knowledge and skills in this new practice framework, you can enjoy greater career satisfaction, health resources will be used more effectively, and patients will have better access to quality care.



A lot of change often results in a lot of confusion. You have told us that your patients, peers, and colleagues have questions about your role and the new practice framework.

What are we doing?

We understand that you act as the “front line representative” and are asked to explain the changes happening in the pharmacy profession right now. These questions present you with opportunities to educate and interact with patients. However, we know they also present the potential for confusion and frustration – both for you and your patients.

We’re rolling out a **new communication plan with four key messages** to provide you with a clear message to help others understand the importance of the work you do.

We are sharing these four messages with you first through this newsletter, poster, and reminder card. Next, we will share them with pharmacy stakeholders and all Albertans.



WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER. You are a spokesperson for our profession and college. Sending a clear, positive message repeatedly will cut through the confusion and create clarity.

ACP wants all Albertans to clearly understand what pharmacists are capable of and what an asset to a health care team you are.

Why are we doing it?

We all know from experience that simple messages, frequently repeated, are the ones we remember. Think, “elbows off the table” or, in commercial terms, “a diamond is forever.”

ACP has learned through experience that the reputation of pharmacists can be positively impacted when we communicate a common message. Rather than delivering different messages to a wide variety of people in a variety of ways, our messages will be more powerful and memorable if, together, we deliver the same words to everyone.

“The facts, and nothing but the facts...”

These four key messages capture the core of what is driving the changes in pharmacist practice. Let's assess each message more closely to make sure we can “put our money where our mouth is.”

Key Message 1

The need

To keep pace with changing patient demographics, health workforce pressures, cost increases and new technology, the healthcare system must mobilize all its resources for the maximum benefit of patients.

Over and over, we hear about shortages of health professionals, rising healthcare costs, and the impact of new technology. This is not just “doomsday” talk. Consider these facts:

- The proportion of Canadians over the age of 55 will rise from 22 per cent of the population to 32 per cent by the year 2020.¹
- The population of Alberta is projected to surpass 4.6 million by the year 2035.²
- As health needs rise among the population, the health care system will need to find more resources to deal with greater demand for health services.³
- A key strategy to improving access to care will be enhanced support for collaborative care.⁴
- Adjusting for inflation, public per capita spending on health care is projected to increase by 58 per cent

by 2020, while public per capita spending on all other government services will increase by 17 per cent.⁵

- Patient medication reviews by pharmacists result in significant changes in patients' drugs and save more than the cost of the intervention without affecting the workload of general practitioners.⁶
- The rapid advancement of technology coupled with the proliferation of information means no one person can be a generalist anymore. We must incorporate the expertise of others to produce the best outcomes.

Key Message 2

ACP's key role

Alberta patients benefit from the key role played by pharmacists. Safe, effective and responsible pharmacist practice is upheld by the Alberta College of Pharmacists.

For nearly a century, Alberta pharmacists have been self-regulated. The standards of practice, code of ethics, and quality assurance processes administered by the college are very exacting because pharmacists feel a collective ownership for their colleagues' conduct and for the care of their patients. Self-regulation also ensures that pharmacists are competent when they enter practice, and maintain and expand their competence throughout their careers.

ACP serves as the vital accountability link between the profession, the public and government. Through their licensing, registration, competence, and professional development programs, the college ensures pharmacists provide safe, appropriate and effective care to Albertans.

Key Message 3

Pharmacists: an excellent resource

Pharmacists are patient-focused, accessible, skilled medication management experts. This makes them an excellent resource to deliver innovative health services and programs cost-effectively.

Well, we hardly need to tell you this! But, just in case you need to convince others, here are some supporting facts:

Patient-focused

- Pharmacists are currently recognized as medication management experts whose role is to work in collaboration with patients, physicians and other health care professionals to optimize medication use to produce positive health outcomes.
- Pharmacists facilitate communication to physicians and other members of the patient's healthcare team about patient concerns related to drug therapy.

1 Antunes, Pedro., Brimacombe, Glenn., McIntyre, Jane, *The Future Cost of Health Care in Canada, 2000 to 2020*, Conference Board of Canada, 2001

2 Alberta Health and Wellness, *Population Projections for Alberta and its Health Regions 2006-2035*, March 2007

3 Esmail, Nadeem, Health Care and the Ageing Population, Fraser Institute, July 2007

4 Wilson, Dr. Ruth, CFPC's President-elect, news release, Oct. 11, 2007

5 Antunes, Pedro., Brimacombe, Glenn., McIntyre, Jane., *The Future Cost of Health Care in Canada, 2000 to 2020*, Conference Board of Canada, 2001

6 Zermansky, Arnold G et al., *Randomised controlled trial of clinical medication review by a pharmacist of elderly patients receiving repeat prescriptions in general practice*, BMJ 2001; 323:1340

Accessible

- Pharmacists participate in health promotion, disease management, ensuring effective drug therapy outcomes, and primary health care in community and hospital pharmacies, clinics, schools, government agencies, and private and public businesses.
- Appointments are not required for most pharmacist services.
- The majority community pharmacies are accessible 12 to 15 hours each day, most days of the year.

Skilled medication management experts

- Pharmacists have a minimum of five years university education devoted to drugs and their use—the most of any health professional.
- ACP requires all pharmacists to maintain and enhance their professional knowledge and skills through professional development activities.

Key Message 4

Better outcomes

Patients experience better outcomes and the healthcare system is strengthened when pharmacists and other health professionals work together to deliver health services.

Patients benefit

When pharmacists are directly involved in patient care:

- the patient's knowledge of their disease and of their drug therapy is improved;

- compliance with medication therapies is improved;
- drug related problems are more readily identified and resolved, reducing patient risk;
- the patient's overall management of their disease is improved, resulting in lower incidence of hospital admissions, and shorter lengths of stay; and
- the patient's quality of life and overall satisfaction with their drug therapy is improved.

Other health professionals benefit

Pharmacists help other health professionals by:

- providing information about medication use;
- notifying physicians about contraindications and drug interactions;
- notifying them of potential risks associated with drug therapies which may interfere with their activities (e.g., risk of postural hypotension associated with certain drug therapies);
- assisting with monitoring drug therapy and medication use to facilitate the achievement of patient specific goals;
- serving as a resource for up-to-date drug information;
- implementing programs to enhance communication between community and hospital settings, resulting in better patient-care through collaborative treatment schemes and follow-up monitoring.

The health system benefits

- When pharmacists are part of the multidisciplinary team involved in obtaining and assessing a patient's medication history before elective surgery, medication discrepancies are reduced by half.⁷
- Clinical pharmacist staffing and specific clinical pharmacy services, including medication therapy management, are associated with

reduced mortality rates, reduced drug costs per occupied bed, reduced total cost of care per occupied bed, decreased lengths of hospital stay, decreased medication errors per year, decreased medication errors that adversely affect patient care outcomes, and decreased adverse drug reactions in a large number of US hospitals.⁸

YOU benefit

Fully utilizing your training and competencies will:

- provide more value to your patients and increase their confidence in you;
- make you a more important and respected contributor to overall patient care;
- make you an exemplary role model for pharmacists of the future;
- ensure that you continue to serve a vital role in health care;
- increase your job satisfaction.

This is just a sampling of the facts that got us to where we are now. The facts are the base of our four key messages. You can elaborate on these messages with examples from your own practice. Share with your patients and colleagues your experiences, any special services you offer, and your plans for any future changes.

And remember, no matter what else changes, one fact remains constant:

Patient safety is foremost in pharmacist practice at all times.

7 Kwan, Y., Fernandes, O., et al, *Pharmacist medication assessments in surgical preadmission clinic*, Archives of Internal Medicine, 2007;167:1034-1040

8 Bond, C.A., Raehl, Cynthia L., *Clinical and economic outcomes of pharmacist-managed antimicrobial prophylaxis in surgical patients*, American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy, Vol. 64, Sept. 15, 2007

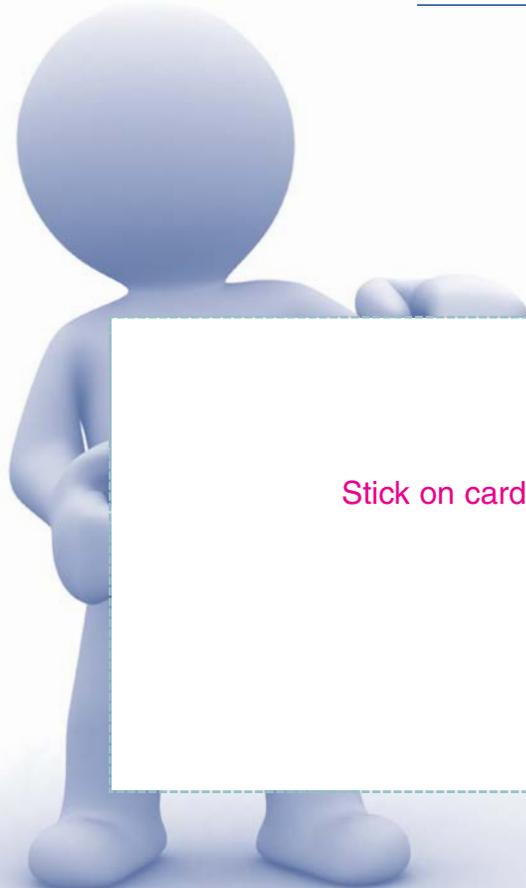
What can you do?

Put the key messages into practice

The best way to ensure your patients and colleagues understand your changing practice is to talk with them! Communicate frequently and thoroughly about the new practice framework and changes in your own practice so that their expectations are realistic.

Sample responses using the key messages

Question	Response using key messages
How do patients benefit from pharmacist prescribing?	<p>Better outcomes</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Pharmacists: An excellent resource</p> <p><i>Patients experience better outcomes when pharmacists and other health professionals work together to deliver health services.</i></p> <p><i>As patient-focused, accessible, skilled medication management experts, pharmacists ensure patients are following the best medication plan.</i></p>
How do I know pharmacist care is safe?	<p>Pharmacists: An excellent resource</p> <p>↓</p> <p>ACP's key role</p> <p><i>Pharmacists are patient-focused, accessible, skilled medication management experts. This makes them an excellent resource to deliver innovative health services and programs cost-effectively.</i></p> <p><i>Patient safety is foremost in pharmacist practice at all times. Safe, effective and responsible pharmacist practice is upheld by the Alberta College of Pharmacists.</i></p>
Why should pharmacists expand their scope of practice?	<p>The need</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Better outcomes</p> <p><i>To keep pace with changing patient demographics, health workforce pressures, cost increases and new technology, the healthcare system must mobilize all its resources for the maximum benefit of patients.</i></p> <p><i>Patients experience better outcomes when pharmacists and other health professionals work together to deliver health services.</i></p>



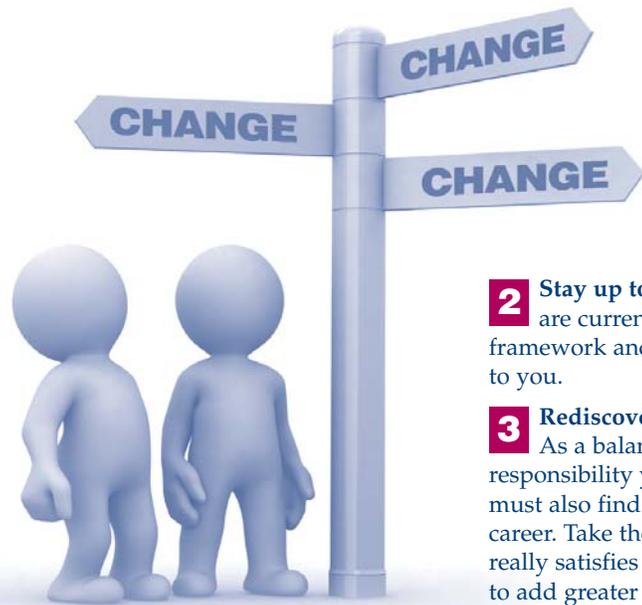
Stick on card here

Key messages reminder card

Tape it to your monitor, attach it to your front counter, slip it in your pocket – whatever you do, keep it handy. This little card is your ticket to creating a clear understanding among patients, peers, and the public about how important your work is.

Key messages poster

Designed just for you, a quick glance at this poster tells you what you need to know about the new key messages and how to use them. Post this where you and your fellow employees will have easy access to it. It's not intended for public viewing, so it doesn't have to take up any space in your dispensing or counseling areas.



Tips for successfully navigating change

1 Initiate conversations. Use the four key messages as the foundation for your discussions.

2 Stay up to date. Make sure you are current on the new practice framework and the opportunities open to you.

3 Rediscover what motivates you. As a balance to the high level of responsibility you carry every day, you must also find satisfaction from your career. Take the time to define what really satisfies you. What could you do to add greater satisfaction for both yourself and your patients?

4 Assess your situation. Use your Continuing Professional Development Plan to assess what skills and knowledge you already possess,

which you would like to acquire, and in what ways you might maximize your opportunities in the new practice framework.

5 Plan your next steps. You know what motivates you. You have identified what new skills or knowledge you would like to acquire. Now what? Figure out what supports you need and map out how to get where you want to be.

6 Dive in and join the fun. Tell your success stories, ask questions, listen to others – a lot of great learning and inspiration can come from sharing!

Resources that are only a click or a call away...

Standards for Pharmacist Practice

http://pharmacists.ab.ca/document_library/HPAstds.pdf

Standards for Operating Licensed Pharmacies

http://pharmacists.ab.ca/document_library/PDAstds.pdf

Provincial legislation

http://pharmacists.ab.ca/practice_ref_library/provincial_legislation.aspx

Federal legislation

http://pharmacists.ab.ca/practice_ref_library/federal_legislation.aspx

One-pagers

- *Understanding your new practice framework — a pharmacist's guide*

- *You and your pharmacist's changing role – a patient guide*
- *A health professional's guide to pharmacist prescribing*

All of these guides are available at http://pharmacists.ab.ca/practice_ref_library/PharmacistResourcesPostersandinfosheets.aspx

acp news and heads up!

http://pharmacists.ab.ca/news_events/newsletter.aspx

ACP's website – <http://pharmacists.ab.ca>

Check out the *New Legislation*, *You & Your Pharmacist*, and *Pharmacist Resources* sections for fact sheets, backgrounders, and FAQs.

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PHARMACISTS ON THE TIGHTROPE

ALBERTA COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS
ALBERTA PHARMACISTS' ASSOCIATION
2008 JOINT CONFERENCE

May 23 and 24, 2008
The Westin Edmonton

This event is poised to be particularly thought-provoking and fun as we explore how to maintain a sense of professionalism – and sanity – in the ever-changing world of pharmacy. Watch for upcoming emails, newsletter articles, and web postings.

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