



Pharmacists attending the Pharmacists' Association of Saskatchewan 9th Annual Conference Reiterate Commitment to Excellent Patient Care

Pharmacists in Saskatchewan show their commitment to excellent patient care every day in the health system. At the 9th annual conference of the Pharmacists' Association of Saskatchewan (April 30 – May 2, 2010), it was clear that pharmacists are absolutely committed to their patients and their profession. “The profession of pharmacy is at a critical juncture, and our conference attendees continue to reiterate how important it is to ensure pharmacists are an integral part of the health care team” says Harold Just, Chair, Pharmacists' Association of Saskatchewan (PAS). Mr. Just goes on to say that “Now, more than ever, pharmacists must be available to patients across the province to ensure positive patient outcomes.”

“As a regular participant in the annual PAS conference, the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists appreciated the opportunity to participate in the dialogue on the many issues facing the profession” says Randy Wiser, President. He goes on to say that “As the regulatory body for the profession, we were especially pleased to hear of pharmacists' commitment to quality pharmacy care in Saskatchewan. We will increase our efforts to work with the PAS to address these issues so that the interests of our patients are well served”.

Pharmacists in Saskatchewan are the most accessible health providers through almost 350 community pharmacies throughout the province and within many Saskatchewan hospitals. Pharmacists are critical to safe and effective drug therapy and contribute significantly to positive health outcomes for Saskatchewan residents. In addition, many pharmacists work in academic settings to train new pharmacists and to contribute to the breadth of research relating to pharmaceutical care, drug therapies, and other topics.

“Hospital pharmacists work to a common goal to ensure safe and effective medication use while patients are in the hospital and in the community” says Dr. Brenda Schuster, President, Saskatchewan Branch, Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists. In the hospital, pharmacists work collaboratively with healthcare colleagues, using medication expertise to advocate for what is best for patients. As hospital practitioners, some work may be different than those of their community counterparts, but the focus is always the same... safe, effective medication therapy to help patients.

Clearly, pharmacists do more than dispense drugs. They provide counseling services related to drug therapy; they work closely with other health providers to ensure patients are getting the treatment they need; they provide clinics on managing chronic conditions; they review patient drug requirements to ensure effective treatment; and they often go above and beyond to secure alternate medicines when required. Pharmacists are often available when other providers are not, and help to keep patients from needing to present at emergency departments. They are the experts related to over-the-counter medications as well and help people make good decisions related to their health needs.

As our population ages, and the complexity of drug therapies and chronic conditions increase, pharmacists will become even more critical to healthy patient outcomes. The recent announcement regarding prescriptive authority for pharmacists in Saskatchewan will also increase the role pharmacists can and should play in patient care. Pharmacists are committed, ethical patient advocates and they are well-positioned to contribute to “patient-first” care in the province.

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