

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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For immediate release

### **Pharmacist Awareness Week celebrates 100 years of provincial pharmacist regulation in Saskatchewan**

The Pharmacists' Association of Saskatchewan (PAS), together with the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists (SCP), the Saskatchewan branch of the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists (CSHP) and the Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns (CAPSI) are pleased to announce that Pharmacist Awareness Week is taking place in Saskatchewan from March 6 to 12, 2011.

Officially declared by the Province of Saskatchewan, Pharmacist Awareness Week is designed to spread the news about the vital health care services that the province's community, hospital and primary care pharmacists provide.

"Not only are pharmacists medication therapy experts who have completed years of university study and training, they also provide education and counselling on a variety of health care issues," said Dawn Martin, Executive Director of PAS. "Whether they are at your community pharmacy, in your local hospital, or behind the scenes in drug research, regulation or education, your pharmacist cares about your health and is working with other health care professionals to provide optimal patient care."

This year is of particular significance, as 2011 marks 100 years of provincial pharmacist regulation as well as the recent introduction of enhanced prescriptive authority for pharmacists in Saskatchewan. In 1911, the Saskatchewan Pharmacists Association (SPhA), the provincial regulatory organization was formed, and has since become known as SCP. PAS, the provincial advocacy organization, originally grew out of the SCP and is also celebrating 10 years of providing pharmacist and pharmacy support in Saskatchewan.

"It's very exciting to be able to look back at 100 years of pharmacy regulation in Saskatchewan," said Christina Swiatecki, President of the Saskatchewan branch of CSHP. "Every year Pharmacist

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Awareness Week gives us a chance to talk about pharmacy in Saskatchewan, to explain to the public what's new in the profession and how things have changed both in hospital and in community pharmacies."

The recent announcement granting pharmacists enhanced prescriptive authority also marks exciting changes and a major addition to pharmacists' ability to provide patient care. Kerry Mansell, Chair of PAS noted "Pharmacists are now being recognized as fundamental to the delivery of primary health care. By

granting pharmacists enhanced prescribing privileges, patient care services and access will vastly improve”.

SCP recently created a website ([www.mypharmacistknows.com](http://www.mypharmacistknows.com)) where patients can access information about enhanced prescriptive authority and other pharmacist services in Saskatchewan. Visitors are provided with links to other relevant websites as well as updates on legislative changes affecting pharmaceutical care services in the province.

“I hope people in Saskatchewan will use this site to compliment the information they receive from their pharmacist,” says Ray Joubert, Registrar of the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists. “No website can replace a pharmacist. Your neighbourhood pharmacist has years of experience and training to draw from, and they can tailor their advice to your specific situation. I can’t overstate how important it is to contact a pharmacist if you have any questions about a medication. However, if people are looking to the internet for information, I hope they look to credible sources of information, and [www.mypharmacistknows.com](http://www.mypharmacistknows.com) is a very credible source.”

In addition to the events and activities taking place across the province, the Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns (CAPSI) will be hosting a variety of educational sessions on campus to address health care concerns and clarify pharmacists role in health care during Pharmacist Awareness Week. Amy Lamb, the CAPSI Sr. Representative for Saskatchewan says “pharmacist’s roles are evolving and pharmacy students hope to shed some light on the skills and abilities that pharmacists can provide to their patients, like smoking cessation counselling and medication assessments”.

Saskatchewan Health also continues to recognize the vital role pharmacists play by piloting pharmacists in 23 primary health care teams across the province, including remote locations. These pharmacists work closely with several other members of the health care team, providing direct patient care through drug therapy, counselling, monitoring, health and lifestyle education, chronic condition management and medication reviews.

Pharmacists continue to be the most trusted health care professional. With the evolution and addition to pharmacy services, pharmacists continue improve access and optimize drug therapy outcomes for their patients across Saskatchewan.

*For more information about Pharmacist Awareness Week and pharmacist-provided programs, contact Myla Wollbaum, Director of Professional Practice, Pharmacists’ Association of Saskatchewan, at (306) 359-7277 or [myla.wollbaum@skpharmacists.ca](mailto:myla.wollbaum@skpharmacists.ca).*