

Date: January 31, 2013

To: Medical Staff
Nurse Practitioners
Laboratory Staff (via AHS Laboratory Services)
Nurse Managers
Nursing Staff (via Zone or Site Pharmacy Management)

cc: Karen Horon, Vice President – Acting, Pharmacy Services
Dr. Jim Silvius, Seniors Health Primary and Community Care Chair, Drugs & Therapeutics Committee

From: Jeremy Slobodan, Pharmacy Director, Therapeutics and Clinical Practice

RE: **AHS Pharmacist Scope of Practice – Alignment with Legislation**

AHS policies regarding pharmacist practice, effective 31 January 2013, align with the Health Professions Act of Alberta, to ensure consistency within AHS, and to benefit patient care. Practices impacted by these policies are:

All AHS pharmacists can:

1. **Prescribe medications** for the purpose of adapting an existing prescription (not including controlled medications), pursuant to a diagnosis;
2. **Order laboratory tests** to assess and monitor their patients.

Also, pharmacists with *additional prescribing authorization* (see Appendix) can:

3. **Prescribe medications** for the ongoing drug therapy management of patients (not including controlled medications), pursuant to a diagnosis.

Pharmacists act within a collaborative team environment and with a patient-centred focus, following established policies and procedures in keeping with Zone-specific ordering processes. Prescribing and ordering of laboratory tests will be communicated to other members of the team through the patient's health record.

To view the policies, Frequently Asked Questions and the framework for pharmacist prescribing, please consult the AHS Pharmacy Services website, on the [AHS Pharmacist Expanded Scope of Practice Policies](#) page.

Should you have any questions, you are welcome to contact me at (403) 352-7648 or by email at jeremy.slobodan@albertahealthservices.ca. If you have questions on processes for pharmacist ordering of laboratory values or prescribing that are more specific to your zones or site (as processes do vary by zone) please contact your zone or site pharmacy lead.

Thank you.

Jeremy Slobodan, Pharmacy Director, Therapeutics and Clinical Practice

Appendix

Alberta Legislation and Regulation

Following enactment of the Health Professions Act of Alberta, new Pharmacist Regulations were approved in 2007 in which the scope of practice for pharmacists expanded to include a number restricted activities including:

- **Prescribing a drug for the purpose of adapting an existing prescription,**
 - a) Alter the formulation or regimen for a medication that has been prescribed; the dosage may only be altered in relation to a new prescription (unless a pharmacist has been granted additional prescribing authorization), or
 - b) Substitute another drug for a prescribed medication if the substituted drug is expected to deliver a therapeutic effect that is similar to the therapeutic effect of the prescribed drug, or
 - c) Renew a prescription to dispense a medication or blood product to ensure continuity of care.
- **Additional Prescribing Authorization: Prescribing a drug for initial therapy** if the clinical pharmacist
 - Has provided evidence satisfactory to the Registrar of having successfully completed the Council requirements and
 - Has received notification from the Registrar that the authorization is indicated on the clinical pharmacist register.
- **Pharmacist ordering of laboratory tests** came into effective July 1, 2010, as part of their duty to consider appropriate information as outlined in the Alberta Pharmacist Standards of Practice.

AHS Policy rationale

Despite these change to the Health Professions Act of Alberta and provincial Pharmacist Regulations, within AHS there was variability among the zones on how pharmacists could work to their full scope of practice as defined by the Health Professions Act.

1. Pharmacists have the knowledge base, abilities, values, interprofessional skills and clinical experience required to practice in expanded and innovative roles.
2. The former Capital Health and David Thompson Health Regions had already enabled all prescribers, including pharmacists, to practice to their full scope of practice with regional policies. This AHS policy now allows for consistency and equal access of patients to these services.
3. Enabling pharmacists to prescribe and order laboratory tests within a collaborative environment enables an optimized workforce within AHS.