NOTES

BY KATHIE LYNAS

Pharmacists not part of current regulatory change on prescribing controlled substances

The federal government is proposing regulations to allow nurse practitioners, midwives and podiatrists to prescribe medications containing legal controlled substances, provided they are authorized to do so by their provincial/territorial regulators.

The proposed regulations, published in May 2012, would expand the list of health professionals eligible to prescribe under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, which currently includes physicians, dentists and veterinarians.

Pharmacists are not included in the new list and the government is not open to expanding that list in the current regulations. However, the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) is building the case for pharmacists' inclusion in the future.

"Health Canada has indicated that it is not going to add other health professionals to the list in this current regulatory process, but it is aware of the desire of NAPRA and other pharmacy organizations to have pharmacists designated under this act," says Carole Bouchard, executive director of NAPRA. "We

"Health Canada... is aware of the desire of NAPRA and other pharmacy organizations to have pharmacists designated under this act"

— Carole Bouchard, executive director, NAPRA

are leading discussions and work among our members to prepare information needed for a submission to the government."

Health Canada is going to provide NAPRA with more details about what documentation is required to put forward a request to add pharmacists. "We do know that the government will require us to demonstrate provincial/territorial support for having pharmacists conduct certain activities with controlled substances," Ms. Bouchard says. "Definitely

some level of support will be needed and our members will facilitate discussions with their provincial/territorial governments."

Work to develop the regulations for nurse practitioners and the 2 other health groups has been going on for several years; however, the government has indicated that the new expected framework that will guide the application process for adding other professionals should be helpful, according to Ms. Bouchard.

Gaining the authority to prescribe controlled sub-

stances is not a policy priority for the Ontario Pharmacists' Association (OPA), says executive director Dennis Darby. The OPA is, however, interested in the impact of expanding the list of prescribers in this area. "As more professionals gain these rights, it's important that we have the proper registries in place so that pharmacists have access to information on who is authorized to prescribe these substances." ■

For more information on this topic, see p. 163