CPhA and other health care professions: Working for a better health care system

The results of a 2010 survey of CPhA members revealed that one of the most highly valued roles for the CPhA to play was to represent the perspective of pharmacists to other health care professionals. This was an astute observation—pharmacy represents one piece of a very complex health care puzzle, and so strengthening relationships with Canada's physicians, nurses, dentists, mental health workers and other practitioners is a key step towards improving real interdisciplinary care across Canada.

The CPhA devotes a great deal of effort to engaging with other health care providers to provide pharmacists' views on key health-related issues. Contacts with other health provider organizations have allowed the CPhA to build coalitions on key issues, strengthen and promote the role of the pharmacist and advocate more strongly with governments on the need for patient-centred care. Ongoing dialogue with the broader health community also helps provide valuable intelligence and information on developments of interest and concern to the pharmacy community.

Although examples of engagement with other health care providers occur on a daily basis, here are some noteworthy instances of recent interdisciplinary efforts:

- Following decades of resistance to increasing scopes of practice for pharmacists, more recent statements by the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) have promoted the idea of enabling allied health professionals such as pharmacists to practise to the full extent of their training and ability.
- As a leading member of HEAL, a coalition of 40 health provider organizations, discussions have already begun about positioning and messaging for the 2015 election, in an attempt to have the parties

discuss relevant issues surrounding health care.

- Through its strong partnership with the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), CMA and the Health Action Lobby (HEAL), the CPhA has been a contributor to the Council of the Federation's effort to promote team-based models of care throughout Canada, with an eye to ensuring that models of care include pharmacists where warranted. There have been weekly discussions and updates between CPhA, CMA, CNA and HEAL representatives to update each other on the progress of the Council of the Federation and relevant developments.
- The Canadian Medical Association and CPhA will shortly issue a joint policy statement on the need for e-prescribing in Canada, which will speak to the benefits of and need for investment in e-prescribing. We also work with other health provider groups to advocate for greater progress on the implementation of electronic health records in Canada.
- The CPhA is a leading member of the G-7, a group of 7 allied health professional organizations that discuss issues relevant to our joint sectors. Recent discussions within the G-7 have helped inform efforts by pharmacy to advocate with third-party insurers for better coverage of pharmacy-related services.
- The CPhA led an effort among 8 national health provider organizations to oppose federal elimination of supplemental health benefits for refugees. These efforts helped restore supplemental benefits, including pharmacy benefits, to approximately one-third of refugees in Canada.
- Although not directly advocacy related, the therapeutic information provided to other medical practitioners via CPhA's

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various publications and products (e.g., the *Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties*, *Therapeutic Choices* and e-Therapeutics+) is an invaluable source of information for practitioners on evidence-based drug therapy.

One important note is that our partners in other health organizations recognize the key role and contribution that pharmacists play in the

health field. They recognize the accessibility, the relevance and the expertise that pharmacists bring to the health system, which is why the CPhA is called upon so frequently to discuss and participate in issues of relevance to the Canadian health care system. Although this is not an overly visible or celebrated function of the national association, it is a responsibility that the CPhA takes very seriously and will continue to prioritize in the years to come. ■

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