in favour of the regulatory package, which implemented pharmacist authority in such areas as immunization, the ordering of lab tests and independent prescribing.

Manitoba is the only province in which regulatory changes must be approved by a majority of licensed pharmacists in a vote. Two previous votes on proposed regulations had been held; in 2008, pharmacists voted against the first

draft and then in 2010, approved an amended version.

However, since that last vote, further changes were made in concert with the provincial government and the MPhA called for yet another vote by the membership.

The target was to have the regulations in place for January 1, 2014.

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Expanded authority for Quebec pharmacists delayed in wake of ongoing negotiations on compensation

“Each day that these new regulations are not in place is penalizing Quebeckers”

—Diane Lamarre, President, Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec

Plans to implement expanded authority for Quebec pharmacists in early September 2013 were put on hold, as the government and pharmacy owners tried to reach agreement on professional fees and related issues.

Bill 41, *An Act to amend the Pharmacy Act*, was passed by the National Assembly on December 8, 2011. The legislation and supporting regulations were to come into force on September 3 of this year but in late August, the province deferred implementation until an undetermined date.

The association representing pharmacy owners, Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires (AQPP), and the provincial health ministry had hit some roadblocks in their bid to agree on remuneration for the expanded professional services. It was reported that the government wanted pharmacists to be paid for only some of those new services, and only through Quebec's public drug plan and not through private insurance plans.

The province's pharmacy regulator expressed strong disappointment with the postponement of the coming-into-force of the legislation and regulations.

“Each day that these new regulations are not in place is penalizing Quebeckers,” said Diane Lamarre, president of Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec (OPQ), in an interview with *CPJ*. “We still have 25% of the population with no

access to a family physician and in some parts of the province, the rate is 50%.”

Under the new authority, pharmacists in the province will be able to adapt prescriptions, substitute medications in certain cases, provide injections for demonstration purposes and prescribe treatments for a defined list of minor ailments.

The colleges for both pharmacists and physicians put considerable effort into setting up the mechanisms for collaboration between the 2 professions around the expanded pharmacist authority—and pharmacists prepared for the change in a major way, Ms. Lamarre says.

“More than 6000 pharmacists completed the mandatory training over the summer, in line with the new regulations,” says the OPQ president. “I think that pharmacists have done all they can to be ready for these new professional contributions.”

Ms. Lamarre says it was somewhat encouraging to hear Health Minister Réjean Hébert express confidence that an agreement on compensation would be reached this fall.

“As a profession, we are ready,” she says. “And we hope that the pharmacy owners and the government put the patient front and centre in their negotiations and reach agreement as soon as possible.”

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