CPhA Advocacy: Year in review

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THE PAST YEAR WAS AN EXCITING AND PRODUCTIVE one for the Canadian Pharmacists Association's (CPhA) advocacy efforts. CPhA's accomplishments include the following:

- *Working closely with the Council of the Federation:* In 2013, the Council of the Federation (now called "Canada's Premiers") asked that provincial and territorial officials look into ways in which pharmacists could be better used in a team-based environment. In early 2014, a CPhA-produced document that identified best practices in the delivery of 4 specific services by pharmacists was approved and shared with all jurisdictions. An initiative was also launched to identify innovative team-based models involving pharmacists (a report identifying these models is expected to be released by the end of 2014).
- *Better promoting the profession of pharmacy:* 2014 witnessed better coordination among national and provincial pharmacy associations in promoting the profession during Pharmacists Awareness Month in March. Among the many initiatives launched, CPhA produced a professional video explaining the expanded services that pharmacists now offer.
- *Engaging with third-party payers:* In 2014, CPhA strengthened its relationship with third-party payers by creating the Pharmacy Health Insurance Steering Coalition (PHISC), a group of senior representatives from pharmacy and the third-party payer community. Among CPhA's other accomplishments was the creation of a Value for Services Toolkit that provides information supporting pharmacy's case to include coverage of expanded pharmacy services in private plans, an initiative that will continue into 2015.
- *Changing the federal regulation on retention of electronic prescriptions:* Starting in late 2013, CPhA began lobbying Health Canada

to reform the regulation in the Food and Drug Act requiring pharmacies to retain 2 years' worth of paper prescriptions. CPhA's recommendation was to allow for electronic retention of prescriptions, similar to what a number of provinces have already enacted. In July 2014, Health Canada confirmed that the federal government would now interpret the regulation to allow for electronic retention of prescriptions.

- *Passage of Vanessa's Law on drug safety:* In November 2014, Royal Assent was given to Bill C-17, otherwise known as Vanessa's Law. This legislation is intended to strengthen drug safety regulations by making it mandatory for health institutions to report adverse drug reactions, and it provides the federal government with additional powers to recall drug products deemed unsafe. CPhA appeared before both a House and Senate Committee to indicate support for this bill.
- *Continuing to represent pharmacy before Parliament:* CPhA appeared 6 times before Senate and House of Commons Committees, speaking on such issues as drug safety, e-cigarettes, drug shortages and scope of practice.
- *Gearing up for the 2015 federal election:* Over the past 2 years, CPhA has been working closely with the Health Action Lobby (HEAL), a coalition of 40 national health organizations, to develop a united platform in advance of the next federal election. This platform was finalized in fall 2014 and unveiled in December. It will be communicated to Canadians and political parties throughout 2015 in the lead-up to the next election.

Building on these successes, 2015 promises to be a year of growth in CPhA's advocacy efforts. With a new Board Advocacy Committee, a new Vice President and advocacy department, and a renewed resolve on the part of the Board to strengthen CPhA's advocacy efforts, CPhA will

be better positioned to influence the issues that impact both pharmacy and the broader health system.

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