



College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

# Practice Standard

## Sale and Dispensing of Drugs by Physicians

<b>Effective:</b>	January 1, 2009
<b>Last revised:</b>	November 28, 2016
<b>Version:</b>	4.0
<b>Next review:</b>	November 2019
<b>Related topic(s):</b>	<a href="#">Promotion and Sale of Products</a> , <a href="#">Advertising and Communication with the Public</a> , <a href="#">Conflict of Interest</a>

A **practice standard** reflects the minimum standard of professional behaviour and ethical conduct on a specific topic or issue expected by the College of all physicians in British Columbia. Standards also reflect relevant legal requirements and are enforceable under the [Health Professions Act](#), RSBC 1996, c.183 (*HPA*) and College [Bylaws](#) under the *HPA*.

**Registrants may seek advice on these issues by contacting the College and asking to speak with a member of the registrar staff, or by seeking medical legal advice from the CMPA.**

## PREAMBLE

This document is a standard of the Board of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia.

As set out in the regulations for the practice of medicine, physicians are not permitted to dispense (sell) drugs to their patients unless they have been authorized by the Board of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia to do so. Only certain physicians authorized by the Board are permitted to sell and dispense drugs to their own patients. This authority does not preclude a physician from dispensing sample drugs to their patients as part of their practice.

## COLLEGE'S POSITION

Dispensing of drugs is a professional activity provided by pharmacists. Any physician who has obtained authorization by the College Board to dispense must follow the standards for dispensing practitioners as set by the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia. Physicians with authorization to dispense assume the same responsibilities required of a pharmacist, which include but are not limited to: accurately labelling and dispensing drugs; recording dispensing information in PharmaNet; maintaining proper records; supplying necessary patient information regarding the proper use of the drug(s); and maintaining adequate security for drug inventories.

These responsibilities may not be delegated. If a registered nurse prepares drugs, the physician must check each prescription for accuracy prior to its release to the patient. A registered nurse may not order drugs from suppliers.

## APPROVAL PROCESS

Physicians seeking permission to dispense drugs to their patients must make a written application to the College Board setting out their rationale. To be approved, the rationale for dispensing must be in the interest of the patients for whom the physician is prescribing, and must be justified by the unique practice arrangements (e.g. remote, rural location), the unique patient population (e.g. patients seeking fertility treatments), or other similar characteristics. In their written application, physicians must also confirm that they will request appropriate access to PharmaNet, and use PharmaNet in compliance with applicable privacy legislation and provincial standards.

Both the College of Pharmacists of BC and BC PharmaCare will be notified upon the Board's approval of a dispensing physician. The physician will then be assigned a practitioner identification number by the College of Pharmacists of BC for recording his/her dispensing in PharmaNet.

Section 26.1 or section 32 of *the Health Professions Act* requires dispensing physicians to respond to and comply with all inquiries made by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC and the College of Pharmacists of BC.

## SOURCES

The three principle statutes that govern the distribution of drugs in British Columbia are:

- [Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act, Drug Schedules Regulation, Bylaws](#) (provincial)
- [Food and Drugs Act and Regulations](#) (federal)
- [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act](#) (federal)

College of Pharmacists of British Columbia website: [www.bcpharmacists.org](http://www.bcpharmacists.org)