



Newfoundland and
Labrador Pharmacy Board

*The Apothecary is the
newsletter of the
Newfoundland &
Labrador Pharmacy
Board.*

*It contains information
on a wide variety of
topics intended to
enhance the practice
of all pharmacists in
the province of
Newfoundland &
Labrador.
All registrants are
responsible for
reviewing any and all
information contained
within including
documents which are
made available on the
NLPB website via links
throughout the
newsletter.*

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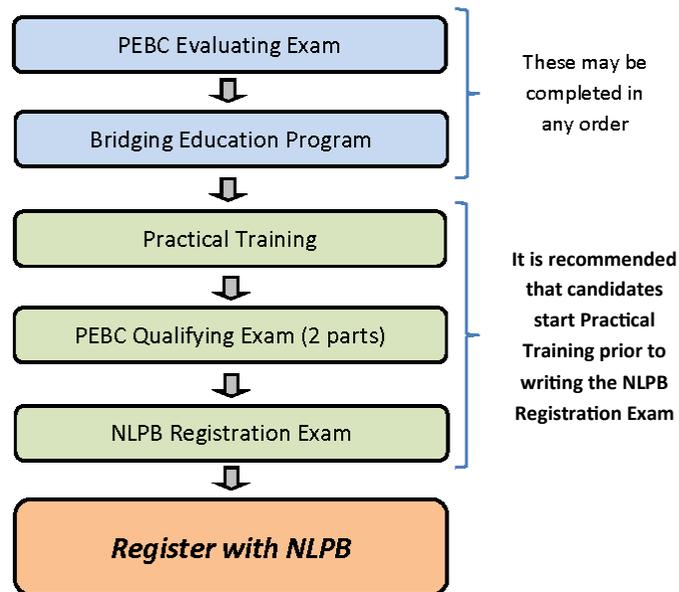
The Apothecary

Spring 2017

Pharmacy Technician Registration Bridging Path Ending This Year

As previously communicated through the NLPB website and in past issues of *The PostScript* and *The Apothecary*, the NL Pharmacy Board has been steadily working towards implementing Pharmacy Technician registration since first approving a transition plan in March 2010. This year, we reach an important milestone as we reach the end of the “Transition Path” to registration.

Transition Pathway (in effect until December 31, 2017)



Candidates who have been working towards registration are reminded that, at this stage, they should be working towards completing the last components to registration, in particular,

- the PEBC Qualifying Exam;
- NLPB Practical Training Program; and
- NLPB Registration Exam.

For more information on these requirements, visit the [Pharmacy Technician Registration Information](#) or [Authorization & Registration Information for Registrants](#) pages of the NLPB website.

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The table below lists some upcoming deadlines and important dates:

April 1 & 2, 2017	PEBC Qualifying Exam Winter 2017 sitting – <i>the deadline to register for this exam has passed</i>
April 6, 2017	Deadline to Register for the Spring 2017 semester of the Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program
April 10, 2017	NLPB Registration Exam Sitting
April 23, 2017	PEBC Evaluating Exam Spring 2017 sitting – <i>the deadline to register for this exam has passed</i>
April 24, 2017	Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program Spring 2017 semester begins
June 9, 2017	Deadline to Register for the Summer 2017 sitting of the PEBC Qualifying Exam
June 12, 2017	NLPB Registration Exam Sitting
June 23, 2017	Deadline to Register for the Fall 2017 sitting of the PEBC Evaluating Exam – LAST NL SITTING
August 7, 2017	NLPB Registration Exam Sitting
September 9 & 10, 2017	PEBC Qualifying Exam Summer 2017 sitting
October 14, 2017	PEBC Evaluating Exam Fall 2017 sitting – LAST NL SITTING
October 16, 2017	NLPB Registration Exam Sitting
December 11, 2017	NLPB Registration Exam Sitting
December 31, 2017	REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR BRIDGING CANDIDATES

While some candidates may have been confused by a recent announcement that PEBC had added an additional NL sitting of the Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam in Fall 2017, the registration deadline **HAS NOT** been **extended**. This additional sitting was added so that candidates who are unsuccessful on the Spring 2017 sitting have another opportunity to write the exam without having to leave the province.

Candidates who find themselves in a position of not being able to complete the full process by December 31, 2017 may be able to appeal to the Board for a limited extension **ONLY IF** they have:

- completed the four Bridging courses;
- completed the PEBC Evaluating Examination (or equivalent); and
- completed or are currently completing the NLPB practical training program

The purpose of the special appeal is to ensure that candidates who are acting in good faith to complete the Pharmacy Technician registration process are not penalized due to circumstances that are out of their control. Candidates will need to demonstrate that they qualify for special consideration because of these circumstances. The Board is currently developing a process for handling this type of special appeal and will be providing more information in the coming months. To register for updates and to receive other pharmacy technician-related information, email your full name, email address, and workplace (if applicable) to inforx@nlpb.ca.

GROWING AWARENESS OF THE ROLE OF THE REGISTERED PHARMACY TECHNICIAN



When Colleen Squires decided to pursue a career in pharmacy, her main goal was to make a difference in the lives of the people living in her community. Colleen started as a pharmacy assistant and jumped at the opportunity to become a Registered Pharmacy Technician when it became available. After completing all of the requirements, including four bridging courses, several national and provincial exams and a practical training program, she became the fifth Registered Pharmacy Technician in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Colleen's day-to-day work varies and has recently expanded to include performing and being accountable for the "technical check" on any given prescription, both new and refills. In doing so, Colleen ensures that the prepared prescription contains the prescribed medication in the correct dosage amount and form, and is labelled accurately. Colleen can also help contribute to a more efficient workflow by performing prescription transfers between other pharmacies, taking verbal prescription orders from prescribers and providing technical information to patients, such as demonstrating the use of medical devices like an EpiPen or Aerochamber.

"A lot of people think we just look at the prescription and count out the pills, but really we look at what the medication is, what the ailment is, whether the patient is able to take it, considering interactions, allergies and compliance issues. We always look at the bigger picture," noted Colleen.

Back when Colleen started out, a person working in her career didn't need formal training, with many people often coming from a cashier role and being trained up to a pharmacy assistant. Some courses were offered, but at the end of the day all of the responsibility lay with the pharmacist.

Today, there are higher standards for all pharmacy roles and everyone is more accountable. Pharmacists remain accountable and responsible for the therapeutic and clinical appropriateness of all new and refill prescriptions, as well as all therapeutic consultation while Registered Pharmacy Technicians can take on accountability and responsibility for the technical aspects of those prescriptions. Colleen believes this raises the bar in pharmacy standards and strengthens the protection of patients. It also allows the Registered Pharmacy Technician to alleviate some of the workload from the pharmacist, in turn allowing pharmacists to focus on the clinical side of the practice and, ultimately, increasing the availability of and access to healthcare services for patients.

As the nature of the profession continues to evolve, employees will need to adapt to the changes. She believes the Registered Pharmacy Technician, Pharmacist and Pharmacy Assistant are all part of a collaborative healthcare team and must continue to be proactive in clarifying what each position can and cannot do. If someone is uncertain about working within the expanded scope, Colleen notes that pharmacists still have the ultimate oversight. She is just glad the opportunity is there for those who are interested in having a greater role and accountability in the pharmacy profession.

Colleen Squires is a Registered Pharmacy Technician currently working at Shoppers Drug Mart in Gander and is the first Pharmacy Technician to serve on the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board.

Defining Each Role - Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacy Assistants

The following table has been developed to help clarify the role of pharmacy technicians versus the role of pharmacy assistants. It should be noted that this table does not exist in isolation - registrants should also review the Standards of Pharmacy Operation as well as the various Standards of Practice.

Pharmacists are expected to ensure the appropriateness of drug therapy, monitor on-going therapy, and educate and consult with patients. The pharmacist remains solely responsible for assessing patients, determining whether or not it is appropriate to fill the prescription, and providing patient consultation. **No prescription, regardless of whether it is for a new medication or a refill of on-going therapy, can be released to a patient without the pharmacist performing these functions.**

Pharmacy Technicians can take responsibility for and perform tasks under the oversight of a pharmacist - when providing oversight, the pharmacist ensures that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the safety and integrity of the dispensing or compounding process.

Pharmacy Assistants can perform tasks under the direct supervision of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician - when providing direct supervision, the pharmacist or pharmacy technician must be present when the activity is being performed and be able to observe, and promptly intervene and stop or change the actions of the individual being supervised.

Pharmacy Services and Competencies	Pharmacy Technician (under <u>oversight</u>)	Pharmacy Assistant (under <u>direct supervision</u>)
perform call back services	No	No
perform medication reconciliation	No	No
perform medication reviews	No	No
witness ingestion of buprenorphine or methadone	No	No
direct patients to the location of non-prescription medications	Yes	Yes
assist patients with non-prescription drug selection and education	No	No
accept accountability, liability, and regulatory responsibility for actions	Yes	No
protect patient confidentiality	Yes	Yes
gather and document information required to create a patient record	Yes	Yes
obtain patient consent, when required	Yes	Yes
answer questions from patients that require therapeutic knowledge, clinical analysis or assessment	No	No
resolve drug-related problems	No	No
refer questions from patients, or actual or potential drug therapy problems, to a pharmacist	Yes	Yes
accept written prescriptions or refill requests from the patient or the patient's representative	Yes	Yes
determine that written prescriptions are current, authentic, and complete	Yes	Yes

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Pharmacy Services and Competencies	Pharmacy Technician (under <u>oversight</u>)	Pharmacy Assistant (under <u>direct supervision</u>)
receive verbal prescriptions from prescribers	Yes	No
transfer and receive prescriptions from pharmacists or pharmacy technicians	Yes	No
determine that it is appropriate to fill a new or refill prescription	No	No
confirm that the pharmacist has assessed the new or refill prescription and determined that it is appropriate to fill	Yes	Yes
calculate, convert, and document the result of dosage or compounding calculations	Yes	Yes
input patient, third-party insurance, and prescription information into computerized practice management systems and generate a label	Yes	Yes
select the necessary product	Yes	Yes
ensure integrity and stability of products including expiry dates	Yes	Yes
count, measure, weigh, pour and/or reconstitute medications	Yes	Yes
perform compounding in accordance with a written formula and preparation process	Yes	Yes
select the appropriate prescription container	Yes	Yes
label container, including relevant auxiliary labels	Yes	Yes
perform the final check of a new or refill prescription to ensure that each step in the dispensing process has been completed properly by verifying that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o the drug, dosage form, strength, manufacturer and quantity dispensed are correct according to the prescription; and <li>o the prescription label is accurate according to the prescription and contains the information required under the Standards of Pharmacy Operation and under federal and provincial legislation 	Yes	No
release a prescription to a patient or their agent after ensuring that the patient or their agent has received or been offered counselling by the pharmacist	Yes	Yes
provide assistance and instruction to patients choosing drug administration devices, monitoring devices and health aids	Yes	No
provide appropriate patient information materials as specified by the pharmacist	Yes	Yes
document activities completed in the dispensing process to create a clear audit trail	Yes	Yes
perform patient assessment for compliance packaging	No	No
perform compliance packaging	Yes	Yes
fill unit dose carts from a fill list	Yes	Yes
check filled unit dose carts	Yes	No
check and restock emergency boxes, cardiac arrest kits, nursing unit cupboards and carts and night cupboard supplies from an approved list	Yes	Yes
ensure the cleanliness, functionality, and integrity of compounding, packaging, dispensing and storage equipment	Yes	Yes

Update on Strategic Plan

On February 17, 2017, the NLPB Staff and Board Members met to determine the Board's Strategic Goals for the upcoming two years. The day started out with an evaluation of the Board's current Mission, Vision and Core Values. All three were reaffirmed with no revisions:

<p><u>Mission</u></p> <p><i>The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board protects the people of the province by governing the profession of pharmacy to ensure quality and ethical care.</i></p>	<p><u>Core Values</u></p> <p><i>The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board's activities and decisions are based on the following values:</i></p> <p><i>Accountability</i></p> <p><i>Collaboration</i></p> <p><i>Integrity</i></p> <p><i>Transparency</i></p>
<p><u>Vision</u></p> <p><i>Advancing pharmacy care for a safe and healthy community.</i></p>	

After reviewing the progress made on the Board's prior goals along with the wide variety of issues and challenges currently facing the Board and the pharmacy profession, the following Goals were determined:

Strategic Goals 2017-2019

1. Expand Quality Assurance Programs to Ensure Patient Safety
2. Enable Expanded Scopes in Pharmacy Practice
3. Support Evolving Pharmacy Practice
4. Develop a Strategic Communications Plan

Over the next couple of months, the Board and Staff will identify and implement the tasks and actions necessary to ensure achievement of these goals.

Online Drug Information Resources

[Finding Reliable Drug Information When You Need It - Opioid Equianalgesic Dosing Resources](#)

It is a common occurrence in all pharmacy practice settings to be called upon to use our expertise to help manage our patient's pain. Whether it is changing to a medication for one that our patient can afford, or switching opioid classes due to inadequate response, it is imperative that pharmacists know what resources are available to ensure that this change is done safely. Presented here are some useful resources and a sample calculation to help with your next opioid conversion.

Guidelines and Practice Tools

There are many resources available with a variety of tools intended to support the safe use and conversion of opioids. Here are just a few that you can use in your practice.

Resource #1: [Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain](#)

These Canadian Guidelines are produced by the National Pain Center at McMaster University. They are a comprehensive overview of non-cancer pain management. The current guidelines are from 2010, but a 2017 update will soon be released.

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Resource #2: [Government of Ontario Document: Opioid Advice: Switching Opioids Safely to Prevent Overdose for Outpatients Prescribed Opioids for Chronic Pain](#)

Sometimes perusing full length guidelines is not practical. Having concise resources that provide just the information you need can be helpful. The Government of Ontario along with the Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has developed a useful and concise resource that comes with management strategies, opioid conversion charts, safety considerations, advice for family members, conversion tools, and links to other relevant resources and guidelines.

Resource #3: Canadian Pharmacist's Letter (membership required)

Canadian Pharmacist's Letter released a Detail-Document in 2012 titled "[Opioid Conversion Algorithm](#)" with a useful algorithm that provides direction on opioid conversion. This document also includes case examples with sample calculations that provide a useful educational review.

Canadian Pharmacist's Letter also has a helpful detail-document titled "[Equianalgesic Dosing for Opioids for Pain Management](#)" that includes a very comprehensive chart on the various dosage forms including extended release, controlled release, and immediate release oral products. This document also includes dosing conversion from oral to parenteral products.

Sample Opioid Conversion Calculation

Pharmacists are well trained in pharmaceutical calculations and we should all be comfortable with doing the calculations required to recommend the appropriate dose of the new opioid to be initiated.

Case: J.C. is a 32-year-old female with severe rheumatoid arthritis. She has been taking Oxycodone CR 120mg twice daily for the past six months. Her new insurance plan will not cover Oxycodone CR, but it will cover MS Contin. To what dose of MS Contin should she be switched?

Total Oxycodone CR daily dose: $120\text{mg}/\text{dose} \times 2 \text{ doses}/\text{day} = 240\text{mg}$ daily

Use an equianalgesic chart to calculate the dose of the new opioid: 240mg oxycodone $\times 1.5 = 360\text{mg}$ morphine

Adjust dose for incomplete cross tolerance: $360\text{mg} \times 50\% = 180\text{mg}$ total daily morphine dose

MS Contin is dosed every 12 hours, to calculate the single dose strength, divide total daily dose by 2 doses per day:
 180mg morphine/day $\div 2 \text{ doses}/\text{day} = 90\text{mg}$ morphine/dose.

Online Dosing Calculators

While conversion calculators are not meant to be a means to replace pharmacist's manual calculations, they are a valuable asset to double-check our calculations.

Calculator #1: [Lexicomp](#)

Most pharmacists are familiar with Lexicomp online, but you may not be aware that they have an opioid agonist conversion tool available on their site. You can access this tool under the calculators tab, titled "Opioid Agonist Conversion". Remember, this tool does the equianalgesic conversion. To get to the dose you want to recommend for your patient, you still need to consider cross tolerance and dose adjust accordingly.

Calculator #2: [Practical Pain Management website](#)

This is another easy-to-use tool, created by three pain experts in the United States. This tool is helpful for calculating the appropriate starting dose for an opioid-naïve patient, or for calculating the dose for an opioid conversion.

Prepared by Pharmacy Clerkship Students, Jessica Chambers and Tyler Smith

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NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR PHARMACY BOARD SYMPOSIUM

MAY 6, 2017

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

8:00-9:00 am	Check-In (with Continental Breakfast)
9:00-10:45 am	Professional Development Program – Personal Health Information Act – a Primer <i>Speaker: Janet O'Reilly, Access and Privacy Analyst, Office of the Privacy Commissioner</i>
10:45-11:00 am	Break
11:00 am-12:00 noon	Professional Development Program – Current Issues – Exempted Codeine and Naloxone <i>Speaker: NLPB Staff</i>
12:00-1:30 pm	Awards Luncheon
1:30-2:15 pm	Open Forum
2:15-3:00 pm	Annual General Meeting

LOCATION & REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The Symposium will take place at the **Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton**, on Stavanger Drive in St. John's. The Hampton Inn & Suites provides amenities that include free hot breakfast, complimentary 24-hour airport shuttle, and access to a fitness center & salt water pool. To book a room at the special reduced rate of \$129 per night, call 709-738-4888 and reference the group name "NL Pharmacy."

To register for the day, visit www.nlpb.ca, log in using your username and password and click the blue "Events" button located at the top of the Member Home screen. Once there, click on "View Upcoming Events" and then "NL Pharmacy Board Symposium" to complete the registration process.

Postscript Recap

Since the last issue of The Apothecary, the Board has posted several issues of The Postscript. A summary of some key articles is provided below. Please visit the [NLPB Newsletters page](#) of the NLPB website to view past issues in their entirety.

January 2017

- ⇒ Is an Electronic Signature on a Prescription Acceptable?
- ⇒ Regulations Now Posted on NLPB Website
- ⇒ Conditional Licence Update
- ⇒ 2017 Registrations Statistics

February 2017

- ⇒ Verifying a Practitioner's Authority to Prescribe
- ⇒ Draft Canadian Opioid Guidelines Open for Comment

March 2017

- ⇒ March is Pharmacy Awareness Month!
- ⇒ 2017 Safe Use and Handling of Oral Anti-Cancer Drugs (OACDs) in Community Pharmacy: A Pan-Canadian Consensus Guideline
- ⇒ Naloxone Nasal Spray Now Schedule II

Looking for a Receipt?

Did you know you can view and print your invoices and receipts at any time? Under **My Profile**, click **Renewal/Other Invoices** to see a list of invoices. Click the invoice number you want to view. You can print it right from your browser by clicking on the printer icon.



The Apothecary

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