

# Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board



## Code of Ethics

September 2014



# Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board

## Preamble

Pharmacy professionals play a pivotal role in the continuum of health care provided to patients. The responsibility that comes with being an essential health resource is significant. To retain the high level of trust and respect that is given to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians by patients, the public and other health professionals, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must be both competent and professional in all they do. As professionals, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are challenged and expected to abide by a higher standard of conduct.

Ethics are the foundation for professional behavior, actions and attitudes. The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board Code of Ethics reflects what the pharmacy profession stands for and reinforces what is unique about the contribution registrants make to patients, to society and to their professions. Consistent ethical behavior creates a positive image of the individual that extends to the image of the profession. In contrast, unethical practices and decisions create a negative image of and diminish trust and credibility about the individual and raise suspicion about the profession.

The Code of Ethics supports the NLPB in fulfilling its mandate to protect the public, enables the NLPB to provide direction to registrants faced with ethical dilemmas and serves as a benchmark for monitoring and addressing registrants' conduct.

## Ethical Principles

1. Registrants hold the health and safety of each patient to be of primary consideration.
2. Registrants maintain a professional relationship with each patient.
3. Registrants respect the autonomy, values and dignity of each patient.
4. Registrants respect and protect the patient's right to confidentiality.
5. Registrants respect the patient's right to receive care.
6. Registrants observe the law, preserve high professional standards and uphold the dignity and honour of the profession.
7. Registrants continuously improve their professional knowledge and skills.
8. Registrants cooperate with colleagues and other health care professionals to ensure optimal patient-centred care.
9. Registrants contribute to the health care system and to societal health needs.
10. Registrants act to enhance and nurture the profession of pharmacy.

## **Guidelines for Application**

### **1. Registrants hold the health and safety of each patient to be of primary consideration.**

- 1.1. Registrants place the health and well-being of their patients at the centre of their professional practice.
- 1.2. Registrants use their specialized knowledge and skills to make informed decisions that are in the best interest of their patients and the public.
- 1.3. Registrants provide prescription and non-prescription medications, services and health-related products that are safe, effective and of good quality.
- 1.4. Registrants advocate for and protect the well-being of each patient, especially those who are vulnerable or disenfranchised.
- 1.5. Registrants take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to patients.

### **2. Registrants maintain a professional relationship with each patient.**

- 2.1. Registrants respect the professional relationship with the patient and act with honesty, integrity and compassion in such a way as to build the patient's trust and confidence in the registrant.
- 2.2. Registrants treat all those they serve with courtesy and respect.
- 2.3. Registrants listen to patients to seek understanding of the patient's needs, values and desired health goals.
- 2.4. Registrants engage in patient-centred care and encourage patients to participate in decisions regarding their health.
- 2.5. Registrants maintain appropriate professional boundaries with patients and ensure any relationship is only for the benefit of those they serve.
- 2.6. Registrants limit treatment of themselves or immediate family members only to minor conditions, emergency circumstances or when another appropriate health professional is not readily available.

### **3. Registrants respect the autonomy, values and dignity of each patient.**

- 3.1. Registrants recognize and respect that each patient has different needs, beliefs, values, experiences and preferences that will influence their attitudes towards health care and their desired health goals.
- 3.2. Registrants provide their patients with information that is truthful, accurate, objective and understandable so that the patients are able to make informed choices about their health care.
- 3.3. Registrants are committed to providing care that is sensitive to, but not prejudiced by, race, religion, social or marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age or health.
- 3.4. Registrants respect the right of a competent patient to make informed decisions about their care including the choice to refuse treatment, care or professional services.
- 3.5. Registrants respect the dignity of patients with diminished competence and seek to involve them, to an appropriate extent along with their agent or caregiver, in decisions regarding their health.

**4. Registrants respect and protect the patient's right to confidentiality.**

- 4.1. Registrants understand, respect and comply with all relevant legislation pertaining to the privacy and confidentiality of personal health information.
- 4.2. Registrants protect the patient's privacy during consultations and keep confidential all information acquired in the course of professional practice.
- 4.3. When collecting personal health information, registrants inform patients of the purposes for collecting the information, any potential uses of the information and who may be expected to have access to it.
- 4.4. Registrants collect or access personal health information only for the purposes of providing care to the patient.
- 4.5. Registrants use or disclose personal health information only with the consent of the patient, unless the consent is exempted by law.
- 4.6. Registrants use or disclose personal health information only for the purposes for which it was collected, except with the consent of the patient or as required by law.
- 4.7. Before using or disclosing personal health information registrants take reasonable steps to ensure that the information is accurate, complete and up-to-date.

**5. Registrants respect the patient's right to receive care.**

- 5.1. Registrants provide appropriate medications and services to their patients.
- 5.2. Registrants who are unable to provide appropriate medications or services to their patients take reasonable steps to ensure patient care is not jeopardized.
- 5.3. Registrants who do not provide medications or services to patients because of a conscientious objection, including personal, moral or religious reasons, must inform pharmacy management of their objections at the earliest possible opportunity. Pharmacy management provides reasonable accommodation of the registrant's right of conscience and develops an appropriate means to ensure the medications or services are provided in as timely and convenient a manner as possible.
- 5.4. Registrants play a role in assisting patients to navigate the health care system, including referring them to other appropriate health care providers, services and community resources.
- 5.5. Registrants continue to provide services to their patients until the services are no longer wanted or required, until another provider has assumed responsibility for the patient or until the registrant has provided reasonable notice of termination of the relationship.
- 5.6. While there is no expectation that medications and services are provided free of charge, registrants will not abandon the professional relationship with the patient simply because the patient is unable to pay.
- 5.7. Registrants plan for continuity of care to their patients in the event of conscientious objection, labour disputes, pharmacy relocation or closure, natural disasters or situations where continuity of care may be interrupted.

**6. Registrants observe the law, preserve high professional standards and uphold the dignity and honour of the profession.**

- 6.1. Registrants obey the laws, regulations, standards and policies of the profession, both in letter and in spirit.
- 6.2. Registrants do not condone unethical or unprofessional conduct by colleagues, co-workers or other health care professionals and report such behaviour to the appropriate authorities.
- 6.3. Registrants embrace the ethical principles of the profession and do not engage in activity that will undermine public trust in or bring discredit to the profession.
- 6.4. Registrants do not jeopardize another registrant's ability to provide optimal patient care or obey the laws, regulations, standards and policies of the profession.
- 6.5. Registrants raise concern if policies, systems, working conditions, or the actions, performance or health of others has the potential to compromise patient care or public safety or is in conflict with the laws, regulations, standards or policies of the profession.
- 6.6. Registrants do not practice under conditions which compromise their freedom to exercise professional judgment or which cause a deterioration of the quality of their professional service or care.
- 6.7. Registrants recognize and avoid conflicts of interest that may arise in the course of their work. If conflicts of interest do arise they should be disclosed and addressed in the best interest of the patient and public safety as soon as possible.
- 6.8. Registrants do not offer inducements to, or enter into arrangements with, prescribers that could affect the prescriber's independent professional judgment in prescribing or that could interfere with the patient's right of choice of a pharmacy.
- 6.9. Registrants do not accept inducements or have arrangements with others that could reasonably be perceived as affecting the registrant's independent professional judgement or affect the quality of patient care.
- 6.10. Registrants do not offer inducements to patients that are conditional on or related to the patient obtaining medications or services from the registrant.
- 6.11. Registrants do not participate in advertising or promotion that diminishes the dignity and honour of the profession or that is outside of the boundaries of the law.

**7. Registrants continuously improve their professional knowledge and skills.**

- 7.1. Registrants are responsible for continually evaluating and improving their professional knowledge and skills.
- 7.2. Registrants are aware of the limitations of their knowledge and skills and practice only within the boundaries of their professional competence.
- 7.3. Registrants respond constructively to the outcomes of quality assurance assessments as well as other evaluations and reviews of their professional performance and undertake additional education and training when required.

**8. Registrants cooperate with colleagues and other health care professionals to ensure optimal patient-centred care.**

- 8.1. Registrants respect the values and abilities of colleagues and other health care professionals.
- 8.2. Registrants consult with colleagues or other health care professionals, when appropriate, to benefit the patient.
- 8.3. Registrants refer their patients to other health care professionals or agencies when appropriate.
- 8.4. Registrants work collaboratively, and maintain professional relationships, with colleagues to ensure patients' needs are met when transferring prescriptions, inventory, etc.
- 8.5. Registrants seek opportunities to work collaboratively with other health care professionals to foster a collaborative approach to health care and professional development.

**9. Registrants contribute to the health care system and to societal health needs.**

- 9.1. Registrants promote health, wellness and disease prevention.
- 9.2. Registrants promote positive changes in the health care system by actively participating in health policy development, review and revision.
- 9.3. Registrants support cost-effective therapies, the rational use of medications and services and the prudent use of health care resources.
- 9.4. Registrants promote fair and equitable access to health care resources and services.
- 9.5. Registrants support the appropriate use, and the reduction of abuse and misuse, of drugs.
- 9.6. Registrants serve as a health resource and participate in programs to educate the public about health.
- 9.7. Registrants foster the advancement of knowledge by supporting scientifically and ethically valid research.
- 9.8. Registrants support environmental stewardship by promoting the safe disposal of drugs and related products.

**10. Registrants act to enhance and nurture the profession of pharmacy.**

- 10.1. Registrants act with honesty and integrity when interacting with patients, colleagues and other health care professionals.
- 10.2. Registrants contribute to the ongoing development of the profession by participating in the education and training of students and interns as well as other health care providers.
- 10.3. Registrants recognize that self-regulation of the profession is a privilege and that each registrant has an ongoing responsibility to merit this privilege and to support the mandate of the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board.