

THE APOTHECARY

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2022 - nlpb.ca

Happy Holidays

from the board and staff of the
Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board

*Wishing you all the best this holiday season
and a healthy and happy new year!*



The official newsletter of the
Newfoundland & Labrador
Pharmacy Board.

Registrants are responsible
for reviewing all information
within this publication.

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*Welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of The Apothecary!
Please read all of the content in this issue. If you have
any questions or comments please email inforx@nlpb.ca.*



@NLPHARMACYBOARD



MESSAGE FROM THE REGISTRAR

Fall updates and season's greetings

It has certainly been a busy fall at NLPB office, and I am delighted to provide you with an update of our activities over the past few months.

In October, NLPB initiated an external consultation, including a survey of NLPB registered pharmacy professionals and focus group sessions with several stakeholders, to inform its next strategic plan. Our strategic planning facilitator received approximately 120 responses to the survey, which provided valuable feedback for the strategic planning process. Thank you to all those who took the time to participate. The anonymous feedback was compiled and presented to the Board of Directors and NLPB staff at the strategic planning session in November and will be very helpful as we move forward with the creation of the 2023-2025 strategic plan.

In the last edition of *The Apothecary*, NLPB shared that it would be working closely with the Department of Health and Community Services on potential changes to the *Pharmacy Act, 2012* and related *Pharmacy Regulations, 2014*. Since that time, NLPB has been meeting regularly with the Department to discuss revisions to legislation. We look forward to continued progress with the government's work to enable pharmacy professionals to use their full scope of knowledge and skills in the best interests of the public and health system.

In the interest of improving and streamlining NLPB processes, at the beginning of this year NLPB made the decision to move to a new information management system and a project plan was established to implement a more advanced system by mid-summer. This would allow pharmacy professionals time to adapt to the new system and for NLPB to address system issues prior to the busy renewal period in the fall. Unfortunately, the release was delayed due to several issues that arose on the system provider's end. As a result, the launch of the new system coincided with the annual renewal period, creating many challenges. On behalf of NLPB, I sincerely apologize for any additional stress and workload that you may have experienced as a result of the new system. Thank you for the patience and kindness you have shown NLPB staff, despite your frustrations. NLPB looks forward to putting the challenges of this fall behind us and to providing a more user-friendly and comprehensive registration system for you. We ask that you please bear with us as we bring the system to full functionality later in the new year.

Finally, as 2022 comes to an end, I would like to acknowledge the significant contributions that pharmacy professionals have made to the health system over the past year. This year, like the past several years, has been one of uncertainty – with the impacts of COVID-19 continuing, changing public health recommendations, ongoing drug shortages, increasing respiratory illnesses in our community, ongoing vaccination efforts, and more. Pharmacy professionals have consistently been the most accessible health care providers in a health system that is facing unprecedented demands. NLPB thanks pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy teams for their efforts to meet patient healthcare needs.

The challenges and unpredictable nature of the past few years is taking its toll on many people, pharmacy professionals included. After the busy weeks leading up to the holidays, I hope that you all have some time to rest and restore. On behalf of the NLPB board and staff, we wish you and yours a very happy holiday season and all the best that 2023 can bring.

Season's Greetings,

Noelle Patten



BOARD MEMBERS**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****CHAIR**

Taggart Norris

VICE CHAIR

Henry White

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Jason Ryan

PAST CHAIR

Gerri Thompson

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES**BOARD-APPOINTED**

Shirlene Murphy
Mark Sheppard

GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED

Currently Vacant
Currently Vacant

NON-VOTING**REGISTRAR**

Noelle Patten

ELECTED MEMBERS**ZONE 1 PHARMACIST**

Amy Randell

ZONE 2 PHARMACIST

Jason Ryan

ZONE 3 PHARMACIST

Jennifer Godsell

ZONE 4 PHARMACIST

Henry White

ZONE 5 HOSPITAL PHARMACIST

Nicole Kennedy

ZONE 6 PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

Jillian Thorne

ZONE 7 AT-LARGE PHARMACISTS

Timothy Buchanan
Taggart Norris

**DEAN, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY**

Shawn Bugden



BOARD MEETING UPDATE

On November 24, the NLPB Board of Directors gathered for a meeting in St. John's. The meeting was held one day following the first of two strategic planning sessions to develop new strategic goals and objectives, which was attended by NLPB Board and Staff.

Updates to Standards & Guidelines

At the November 2022 meeting, the NLPB board approved revisions to both the [Guidelines Regarding the Sale of Naloxone in Community Pharmacies](#) and the [Standards of Practice for The Sale of Exempted Codeine Products in Community Pharmacies](#).

Guidelines Regarding the Sale of Naloxone in Community Pharmacies

In undertaking the review of these guidelines, consideration was given to feedback from the provincial take-home naloxone program and ODT Centre for Excellence, as well as current practices in other provinces. In the interest of harm-reduction and increased patient access, specific effort was made to scale the guidelines back in the areas of assessment, documentation, and labelling but to retain focus on the patient consultation expectations. The document was also revised in several places to reflect the recently revised [Standards of Pharmacy Operation - Community Pharmacy](#).

Standards of Practice - The Sale of Exempted Codeine Products in Community Pharmacies

In undertaking the review of these standards, consideration was given to language used in other standards that speak to assessment and documentation expectations, recent revisions to the [Standards of Pharmacy Operation - Community Pharmacy](#), as well as references from other

provinces where similar restrictions on the provision of exempted codeine products are in place.

Committee Appointments

The following committee appointments were approved at the November 2022 meeting of the board:

- Disciplinary Panel: Heather Seeley (R.Ph), Mike Batt (R.Ph), Sheldon Baines (R.Ph), Kristina Myers (R.Ph), Jeffery Fost (R.Ph), Sarah Way (R.Ph), Wanda Spurrell (R.Ph), Sandi Osmond (R.Pt), Debi Snow (R.Pt), Deep Upadhyay (R.Pt), and Barbara Ann Gill (R.Pt) have all been renewed for a further three-year term. A call for expression of interest seeking pharmacists to fill the three vacant pharmacist appointments will be issued in 2023.
- Pharmacy Practice Advisory Committee: Justin Peddle (R.Ph), who has recently moved into the position of Regional Practice Consultant - Pharmacy for Eastern Health has been appointed to the committee for a term of three years.
- Finance and Audit Committee: Henry White, in his capacity as Board Vice-Chair, has been appointed as a member and chair of the committee.

Deadline Extensions

Following a review of submitted requests, the board approved extensions of the Compounding Standards implementation deadlines for nine hospital pharmacy sites.

Budget 2023

The 2023 budget was approved by the board at the recommendation of the Finance and Audit Committee.



NLPB REGISTRANT & PHARMACY PORTALS — A PROJECT OVERVIEW

As part of NLPB's internal quality improvement processes, NLPB staff conduct reviews of the software programs we use in our operations to ensure staff have access to the tools they need while providing a user-friendly and efficient registration and licensing system. As part of our regular course of business and operational cycle, in 2021 we reviewed our database solution to ensure it was supporting our data management needs. As a result, NLPB issued a Request for Proposals for Information Management Software on Friday, September 24, 2021.

Following a thorough review of submitted proposals, NLPB made the decision to move to a new registrant management system in the first quarter of this year. In order to avoid a disruption of service for pharmacy professionals, the selected vendor agreed to a phased launch, with the registrant and pharmacy portals being developed and launched by the first week of May and the remaining portals to be launched by July 2022. The phase one launch was planned to coincide with the end of the service agreement with the previous system provider.

Due to various issues with the vendor's project team, the project start date was pushed out by three months. The registrant portal was launched in September. The pharmacy portal launch date was further extended due to required updates to the platform on which the portal was developed.

Unfortunately, these delays caused the launch of these portals to coincide with NLPB's registration and license renewal periods. Although the project team thoroughly tested the portals prior to launch, post-launch bugs are a common occurrence when releasing new online systems. Due to the timing of the launch, pharmacy professionals were simultaneously challenged with login issues and bugs with the renewal process. In addition, they were asked to adapt to new security features. Acknowledging these challenges, NLPB extended the annual renewal period by two weeks. In addition, to support pharmacy professionals in navigating the portals and successfully renewing, NLPB staff developed various instructional guides and tips and were available to troubleshoot system issues throughout the entire renewal period.

NLPB would like to extend our thanks to pharmacy professionals for their patience during this challenging transition. As the project continues into 2023, additional portals will be launched with new features, including online applications, designed to improve processes and best support pharmacy professionals completing registration and licensing processes. NLPB staff will continue to work to ensure a smooth launch for these portals as well as address any remaining bugs in the registrant and pharmacy portals.

2023 ANNUAL REGISTRATION & LICENSING RENEWAL



734
Pharmacists



255
Pharmacy
Technicians



223
Pharmacies

NLPB's annual renewal period ended on December 15, 2022. To date, 734 pharmacists and 255 pharmacy technicians have renewed their registration and all 223 pharmacies have renewed their licence. All registrants must be registered and all fees must be paid prior to working in 2023. It is the pharmacist-in-charge's responsibility to ensure the pharmacy licence has been renewed and that all regulated staff are registered to practice in 2023 before the end of the year.



PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS— UPDATES

Over the past five years, NLPB has continued to [highlight the importance of professional liability insurance \(PLI\) for all pharmacy professionals](#). PLI is a legal and ethical requirement of registration as a pharmacist, pharmacy technician, pharmacy intern, or pharmacy student in Newfoundland and Labrador. Perhaps most importantly, PLI is necessary to ensure that patients are fully supported in the event of a medication or patient counselling error that causes harm.

Recent annual audits of PLI coverage for pharmacy professionals in this province have yielded results that identify a percentage of pharmacy professionals for whom coverage has lapsed or been inadequate as per the requirements set forth by NLPB, generally as a result of inadvertent error. Following the development and implementation of various communication-based efforts to reduce the lapse rate, [NLPB struck a Professional Liability Insurance Taskforce in 2020](#) to identify ways to help minimize these errors.

The PLI Taskforce conducted research and worked with an external consultant to develop a way forward. As a result, NLPB has recently implemented changes to the [Professional Liability Insurance Requirements for Registration](#) that create a **dual onus on the individual pharmacy professional and the pharmacist-in-charge** to ensure all registered employees' PLI policies are up to date. Creating this second layer of accountability will help catch inadvertent errors in PLI coverage for registered pharmacy professionals, such as missed renewal dates or inadequate levels of coverage.

These changes are required to be implemented **no later than September 30, 2023**. Registrants who are scheduled to renew their PLI policy before that date may implement the changes at that time. Registrants who are not scheduled to renew their PLI policy before that date are required to proactively make the changes in advance of September 30, 2023.

Regardless of the changes, the basic requirements will be retained:

- PLI policies must be personal insurance - that which names the registered pharmacy professional personally and covers them for all aspects of their practice and in all locations in the province in which that practice occurs.
- The minimum limit of coverage is \$2,000,000 per claim or per occurrence and \$4,000,000 annual aggregate.
- An annual certificate of coverage from the insurer is required to confirm that the PLI policy meets the criteria set by NLPB.
- Registered pharmacy professionals must upload a copy of their annual certificate of coverage to the NLPB Registrant Portal within 30 days of the policy start or renewal date.

Changes:

- Registered pharmacy professionals must provide a copy of their annual certificate of coverage to the pharmacist-in-charge within 30 days of the policy start or renewal date to be kept on file at the pharmacy at which they practice.
- Registered pharmacy professionals who practice as relief must present a copy of their annual certificate of coverage to the pharmacist-in-charge at any pharmacy where they are working.
- PLI policies must include a clause to the effect that the insurer will notify NLPB if the policy is cancelled, expires, or ceases to meet the criteria set by NLPB. PLI policies must also include a clause ensuring that the PLI policy will continue in force until the required notice is provided to NLPB.
- Pharmacists-in-charge will be asked to provide a declaration during the pharmacy licence renewal process that they have confirmed that all pharmacy staff have valid PLI policies and that copies are kept on file at the pharmacy. This declaration will be added to next year's renewal for 2024.



PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS— UPDATES

FAQs:

Q: Will this create more work for the pharmacist-in-charge?

A: It is already the responsibility of the pharmacist-in-charge to ensure compliance with all applicable legislation, regulations, bylaws, and NLPB standards of pharmacy operation and standards of practice. These new processes are intended to assist pharmacists-in-charge with ensuring that registered pharmacy professionals practicing in the pharmacy hold appropriate PLI policies by requiring them to provide copies of their annual certificates of coverage.

Q: As a relief practitioner, do I have to provide a copy of my annual certificate of coverage to the pharmacist-in-charge at every pharmacy I work in? As a pharmacist-in-charge, do I have to obtain a copy of the annual certificate of coverage from every relief practitioner who works in the pharmacy?

A: Yes, but this only needs to be done once per coverage year. Once a relief practitioner's annual certificate of coverage is on file at the pharmacy at which they are practicing, a new one does not need to be provided for each shift.

Q: What does it mean that the insurer will notify NLPB if a PLI policy is cancelled?

A: Auto-reporting is a common provision in PLI policies. It means that if your policy is cancelled, not renewed beyond its expiry date, or the insurer becomes aware that your policy no longer meets the criteria required by NLPB, the insurer will automatically report this to NLPB. Your PLI policy will remain in effect until this report has been provided to NLPB. Upon receipt of this information, if you are still registered to practice, NLPB will contact you to remind you that you must stop practicing immediately until you

have an appropriate PLI policy in place. **Please remember that it is still your responsibility to ensure that you have appropriate PLI in place at all times. Auto-reporting is a tool to help catch inadvertent lapses. You are still responsible for failing to maintain appropriate PLI coverage if you practice without the required coverage at any time.**

Q: How much does an auto-reporting provision cost?

A: The cost of an auto-reporting provision is at the discretion of your insurer. Not all insurers are the same, and NLPB does not have any influence or control over PLI policy cost for registered pharmacy professionals.

Q: How do I add an auto-reporting provision to my PLI policy?

A: You will need to notify your insurer prior to your next renewal (or prior to September 30, 2023 if you will not renew your PLI policy again before that date) that you need this provision added. Have a copy of NLPB's [Professional Liability Insurance Requirements for Registration](#) available to provide to your insurer if needed.

Uploading your PLI Certificate

Registered pharmacy professionals are required to maintain a current record of their professional liability insurance policy in their NLPB Registrant Portal profile.

For instructions on recording your PLI information in the system, please refer to the [NLPB Registrant Portal User Guide: Adding/Updating Professional Liability Insurance](#).



DISCONTINUATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

As of November 30, 2023, the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board will no longer be providing accreditations of professional development (PD) programs. The Board of Directors made this decision based on the following:

- NLPB is the only pharmacy regulatory body in Canada that is currently accrediting PD programs;
- NLPB does not have the resources or expertise to provide the same level of assessment of PD programs that other accrediting bodies provide.

Individuals or groups who are seeking accreditation of pharmacy education programs are encouraged to contact the [Canadian Council on Continuing Education in Pharmacy \(CCCEP\)](#) for information on alternate accreditation services. CCCEP has several accreditation processes available to education providers, including accreditation of individual programs, conference accreditation, and accreditation for regularly scheduled series.

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE UPDATE

Dismissed: refusing to refill prescription early

A complainant filed an allegation against a pharmacist when she refused to refill the complainant's Ventolin inhaler. The pharmacist indicated that it was too early for a refill and that she would not dispense another inhaler without a note from a physician because of the risks associated with overuse. The complainant had a history of early refills on Ventolin, and the pharmacist was concerned that the complainant's breathing condition was not being adequately controlled.

While agreeing that both withholding the Ventolin refill and providing the complainant with a refill could have potentially created risks for the patient, the Complaints Authorization Committee ("Committee") did not find reasonable grounds to believe that the pharmacist had engaged in conduct deserving of sanction and the allegation was dismissed. In making this decision, the Committee considered the professional responsibilities set out in [section 3.1 of the NLPB Standards of Pharmacy Operation – Community Pharmacy](#) and [sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, or 1.7 of the NLPB Code of Ethics](#).

LESSONS LEARNED

Pharmacists are reminded that when making challenging clinical decisions such as this one, it is important to ensure that consideration is given to all available information, including any potential risks to the patient. Once the decision has been made, the pharmacist should ensure it is communicated and documented effectively and that the patient understands the rationale for the decision.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Closed December 26 to January 2

Regular office hours resume on Tuesday, January 3, 2023



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