



BC pharmacists granted legal authority to give injections

Oct. 21, 2009 – BC pharmacists realized a major milestone today with the coming into force of regulations changes giving them the legal authority to administer drugs by injection.

“Pharmacy practice is changing and enabling BC pharmacists to administer injections will improve patient care for British Columbians,” said BC Pharmacy Association (BCPhA) CEO Marnie Mitchell. “Pharmacists are the most accessible of all health care workers, and are ideally positioned to support BC health care in a pandemic situation and to fulfill some other injection-administration needs.”

Since the summer, BCPhA has been working with the College of Pharmacists of BC (CPBC), Ministry of Health Services and BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) on the development, accreditation and implementation of the training program. The training program consists of two components: an online pre-study course and a full-day, live workshop where pharmacists receive practical training in administering subcutaneous, intradermal, and intramuscular injections. BCPhA has already trained the first wave of pharmacists for this important new role.

“To date, the response from pharmacists has been enthusiastic. Those who have successfully completed the training program and are granted authority by the College of Pharmacists of BC (CPBC) to administer injections will be able to administer the H1N1 vaccine after it’s distributed to pharmacies in early November,” added Mitchell. “British Columbians are encouraged to contact their pharmacies to find out if a pharmacist certified to administer injections is available at their location.”

With about 2,800 community pharmacists practising in 1,000 BC community pharmacies, and many pharmacies open evenings and weekends long after physicians’ offices and public health units have closed, pharmacists are a logical, additional resource for injections administration.

The role of administering injections is consistent with pharmacists’ level of expertise as pharmacists already have a basic education that includes anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, pharmacokinetics, and pharmacology.

Earlier this year, BC pharmacists were granted the ability to authorize routine prescription renewals.

In other jurisdictions, injection training programs have proven very successful and well-utilized. Since 2007, Alberta pharmacists have had the right to prescribe some medications and administer drugs by injection. The right to administer injections has also been granted in Manitoba and New Brunswick, and is under consideration in Nova Scotia and Ontario. In the United States, all 50 states have been granted authority to administer injections with more than 60,000 American pharmacists trained in this procedure.

The BC Pharmacy Association represents more than 2,200 pharmacists and 640 pharmacies in B.C. who provide trusted advice and accessible care to patients throughout British Columbia.

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