



British Columbia Pharmacy Association  
1530 – 1200 West 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave.,  
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Re: *Plans to let pharmacists prescribe drugs assailed*

Dear Editor: This recent news item in the *Vancouver Sun* which identifies changes to the Alberta Health Care Act and the plan to allow pharmacists to prescribe needs some questioning. Pharmacist's knowledge base to prescribe is an assumption that is not based on the solid professional track record of the profession.

Every practicing pharmacist in this province assumes a commitment to their professional code of ethics and the health and well being of their patients. The characterization of pharmacists as "being in the business of promoting product" and bringing into question a pharmacist's credentials and expertise does a disservice to both the profession and the individuals educated to practice as pharmacists.

Pharmacists are highly trained health professionals and the medication experts in the health care system. They play an extremely important role in helping to ensure patients are receiving the best possible care with their medication prescriptions and regularly intervene on behalf of patients with doctors to discuss incorrect dosage or extension of drug interactions and duplicate therapies. They are often the first point of contact for a patient with the health-care system and can recommend a wide array of non-prescription drugs.

Pharmacists are regulated by law and follow a professional standard of practice. They actively support the patient's right to receive competent and ethical health care - including that all drugs are prescribed, dispensed and used in a safe and effective way.

At the BCPhA we are very supportive of the professional role that pharmacists play as part of the health-care team and are following the evolution towards better use of pharmacists' skill sets in the health-care system in other provinces, with great interest.

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