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# Position Statement on the Professional Assessment and Development Program for B.C. pharmacists

Approved by the BCPhA Board of Directors on September 28, 2007

## Background

The College of Pharmacists of B.C. implemented the Professional Development and Assessment program beginning September 1st, 2003. The program was designed so that every three years 1500 pharmacists would be selected to take part in the program.

The program was developed based on a set of recommendations produced by a college Task Group in 2001. The Task Group set out to devise an assessment system under which pharmacists had choice, flexibility and a program clearly linked to every day practice and knowledge.

Participants of the program began by completing a self-assessment form and choosing to either complete a 2.5 hour Knowledge Assessment (exam), or put together a Learning and Practice Portfolio. After completing PDAP, pharmacists are not required to participate in the program again for another six years.

Based on this assessment format, concerns about the program were voiced by pharmacists at the Annual General Meetings of CPBC and the British Columbia Pharmacy Association in November, 2006. In response, the college began work on developing a continuing education-based competency assessment option as an addition to the current Knowledge Assessment and Learning Practice Portfolio options.

The BCPhA conducted an online survey of its members in the spring of 2007 and asked if they supported the introduction of a continuing education component as an option, and if they supported introduction of such an option prior to the completion of the current PDAP cycle. The results were that 90 per cent were in favour of

introducing the new option, and 75 per cent were in favour of doing so prior to the completion of the current cycle in 2009.

## Current Issues

The debate on this issue focuses on a few key questions:

1. What is the appropriate role of the college in establishing ongoing professional competency assessment tools?
2. What are the appropriate standards for such tools?
3. Is the addition of an option based on continuing education credits appropriate?
4. If 'yes' to Question #3, what is the preferred timing for introduction of such an option?

## Position Statement

1. What is the appropriate role of the college in establishing ongoing professional competency assessment tools?

**It is our position that the college clearly has a role in establishing an ongoing professional competency assessment process. This is indicated in the Health Professions Act which says that one of the roles of a college governing a health profession is "...to establish and maintain a continuing competency program to promote high practice standards amongst registrants."**

position statement



British Columbia  
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2. What are the appropriate standards for such tools?

**We recommend that the standard be comparable to professional competency assessment standards for pharmacists in other jurisdictions in Canada.**

3. Is the addition of an option based on continuing education credits appropriate?

**It is our position that because pharmacists practice in a variety of different settings, and approach their ongoing professional development in different ways, it is valuable to have different options to demonstrate ongoing professional competence. Given the prevalence of continuing education programs as an available professional development approach, and the acceptance of continuing education credits as an appropriate form of professional development among other health professions in B.C., and among pharmacists elsewhere in Canada, we particularly welcome the development of a new option based on continuing education credits.**

4. What is the preferred timing for introduction of a continuing education credits option?

**It is our position that the new option should be offered as soon as it can be developed by the college. While we recognize that the majority of B.C. pharmacists have satisfied the college requirements using the two options currently available, we do not feel that it would be unfair to them to expand the options prior to the end of the current PDAP cycle. Once established, we would expect the expanded range of options to be available to all pharmacists.**

