



IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Thoughtful Reflection
- 3 CE Notification in Registration Renewal
- 3 Nominations for Board Elections
- 4 News Briefs
- 6 On Call (Methadone for Pain)
- 7 Practice Matters

readlinks



First Pharmacy Technician Registrants

A total of 21 pharmacy technicians, 14 of whom were present at the College's recognition celebration held in conjunction with the June Board meeting, have successfully completed all of the required learning necessary to become regulated healthcare professionals and are therefore eligible to be the first pharmacy technician registrants of the College of Pharmacists of BC (see issue 4 of TechTalk available on the College website: *Key Initiatives / Pharmacy Technician Regulation* for event details).

Each of the members of this inaugural group has come through the 'current technician' path to regulation (refer to the College website: *Key Initiatives / Pharmacy Technician Regulation* for details) and have been working in either community or hospital pharmacies throughout BC for many years.

The regulation process, which has been underway for nearly a decade, establishes a pharmacy technician as an independent healthcare professional who, as prescribed in legislation, is responsible, accountable and liable for a defined scope of practice related to the technical aspects of product preparation and drug distribution.

As summarized in his personal message and greeting read by Bob Nakagawa, Assistant Deputy Minister, the Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Health explained, *"regulated pharmacy technicians will play a critical role in the healthcare system, taking on increasing responsibility in the workplace and providing pharmacists with more time to assess and counsel patients and help them best manage and understand their drug therapies."*

"The importance and significance of the role that you now play in the safe and effective delivery of pharmacy services cannot be understated. You are an integral part of the healthcare team and... must remain committed to upholding your legal and ethical obligation to protect and promote the health and well-being of your patients"

Randy Konrad,
Chair, College of Pharmacists of BC

(Excerpt from his speech to the Inaugural Group of Pharmacy Technicians)

Continued on back page...

Thoughtful Reflection...



Marshall Moleschi, Registrar

As many of you know, I will be leaving this position of Registrar at the end of August and moving to Ontario to become the Registrar there.

It has been an honour to be selected by you, through the Board, to serve my term as Registrar at the College. In Canada we are privileged to have the self-regulation of healthcare professionals, ensuring the behaviours and scope of registrants lead to the best health outcomes for Canadians. During my term, the Board's focus has been on creating a regulatory, professional and practice environment that is enabling and permissive for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to be able to apply their full knowledge, skills and abilities to make significant decisions in the best interest of their patients. In fact, the foundational change has been to create an opportunity for pharmacists to not only dispense, counsel, and give advice, but now also to make decisions about our patients' care.

It is moving from the black and white world of "College rules" based practice to the grey world of "decision making" based practice using not only the rules, but also fundamentals of professional judgment: "Navigating the Grey". Pharmacy technicians now have a defined scope in drug distribution and defined knowledge, skills and abilities that they need to demonstrate. These are significant changes to our profession, opportunities that occur only once in a generation or two.

As I reflect on these changes: new legislation, new technology, new registrants, new scope, adapting prescriptions, injection authority,

and pharmacy involvement in major health policy in BC, I can say that I am so proud of the College staff, the pharmacists and the pharmacy technicians that are taking up the challenge to make a difference in healthcare in BC. Each and every one of you make a difference. The profession of pharmacy is more relevant, more needed and more respected than ever before.

Serving the public and the profession, as Registrar since 2005, has been the opportunity of my lifetime and the highlight of my career. I want to recognize each and every one of the staff at the College for their initiative, hard work and focus to carry out the direction set by the Board. And I want to congratulate you, as professionals, for stepping up to practice in new and more meaningful ways. As I look to the future, the College of Pharmacists of BC and the profession of pharmacy are well positioned to meet the very real needs of our patients as our population ages. You are the leaders in healthcare, and are creating a satisfying and rewarding career in

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pharmacy. You are making a real difference! Congratulations and continued success.



First Cycle of Assessment Component will test Computerized Format

In addition to the yearly Continuing Education (CE) component (see adjacent article), the College's Professional Development and Assessment Program (PDAP), as outlined in legislation, also contains an Assessment component which, as previously communicated, will launch in 2012.

The Assessment component requires all registrants, on a 10-year cycle with approximately 10% of registrants randomly selected each year, to sit a Knowledge Assessment (KA) exam that for the first time will be delivered utilizing a 'computerized' format rather than a 'paper' format. In addition to the obvious advantages of environmental friendliness and cost efficiencies, the paperless delivery of the exam, while ensuring greater integrity of the data, will ultimately provide a more streamlined process for registrants and the College.

Continued on page 5...

Notification of PDAP's CE Component included in your Annual Registration Renewal Letter

As you are likely aware, the College's Professional Development and Assessment Program (PDAP) now contains a yearly Continuing Education (CE) component which, although launching this summer, has no single start date for all registrants but rather is linked to individual registrant's Annual Registration Renewal. This means that the launch of the program, which begins with registrants who renew their registration in August 2011, will be staggered throughout the next 12 months. All the necessary information regarding this new requirement will be included in the Annual Registration Renewal letter which is mailed directly to registrants about 6 weeks prior to their registration renewal date.

To illustrate, registrants whose registration renewal month is August 2011 will be the first to receive, in their Annual Registration Renewal letter, notification that they will have the next 12 months to complete their CE requirement and submit it to the College prior to their registration renewal in August 2012. Similarly, those registrants whose registration renewal month is September 2011 will be notified at that time, in their renewal letter, that they have the next 12 months to complete their required CE and submit it to the College prior to their registration renewal in September 2012. And so on, and so on. The last registrants to begin the process will be those whose registration renewal month is July 2012. These registrants will be informed at that time that they have until July 2013 to complete and submit their CE.

The bottom line is that there really is no action required until you receive notification in your Annual Registration Renewal letter. The renewal package will provide all of the information needed to understand and complete the CE requirement.

Nominations for Board Elections due in August

The current Board of the College of Pharmacists of BC, as defined in legislation, consists of 7 pharmacists, 1 pharmacy technician and 4 public appointees. Board elections will be held this fall for pharmacists in Districts 1, 3, 5 and 7 and, for the first time, for pharmacy technicians in the newly established District 8, which includes the entire province.

The role and responsibility of Board members is significant and it's important to remember that even though an election process is used to establish Board membership, the mandate of the Board is to uphold the College's objective, as set

out in the *Health Professions Act (HPA)*, to serve and protect the public.

In order to be eligible to run in one of the designated districts, candidates must be a pharmacist or pharmacy technician in good standing with the College, and assigned to the electoral district in which they are nominated. In addition, nominations in Districts 1, 3, 5 and 7 must be signed by 3 pharmacists and nominations in District 8 must be signed by 3 pharmacy technicians. To sign a nomination, registrants must be in good standing with the College and assigned to the district in which the nominee is running for election.

Full election details, along with nomination forms, will be mailed to all eligible registrants in each of the applicable electoral districts on August 5th with a **nominations deadline of August 29, 2011**. With the mail-in voting ballot, mailed to all eligible registrants in each

of the applicable electoral districts on September 12th and due back to the College by October 19th with the election tally scheduled for two days later on the 21st, candidates will have nearly two months to campaign.

Each of the elected Board members will serve a 2-year term commencing at the beginning of the Board's regularly scheduled November 2011 Board meeting.



News Briefs

Annual Report Now Available Online

The College's Annual Report for the fiscal year 2010 – 2011 (March 1, 2010 to February 28, 2011) is now available on the College website. This year's report, entitled *Assurance of Quality Care*, includes the College's audited financial statements and outlines the Key Accomplishments / Milestones achieved in relation to the College's strategic plan.

As articulated in the report, much of the work of the College this past fiscal year was focused on developing and revising legislation, standards, and policies or procedures that guide the profession and ensure that as pharmacy practice evolves, it continues to be safe and effective.

NOTE: a printed copy of the College's Annual Report can be ordered, through eServices, for a nominal fee.

Updated Email Address, a Mandatory Requirement

With the College, like most businesses today, relying more and more on email for the timely, efficient and cost effective dissemination of important information, such as annual registration renewals, it's imperative that our database stays current. In fact, legislation requires all registrants to ensure that their contact information, which would include an email address, remains current with the College.

To update your contact information simply log on to eServices via the home page of the College website.

Search for New Registrar Begins

With the Board having accepted the resignation of College Registrar Marshall Moleschi, a *Registrar Search Task Group* has been struck to begin the executive search for his replacement. Marshall, who has been Registrar of the College since 2005, will be assuming the position of Registrar for the Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP) effective September 1, 2011.

In accepting his resignation, the Board congratulated Marshall and thanked him for his dedication, leadership and significant contributions to the mission and mandate of the College and acknowledged that his appointment as OCP Registrar is a positive step in the continued advancement of the pharmacy profession across Canada.

The Board has appointed Suzanne Solven, Deputy Registrar to the position of Interim Registrar and does not anticipate any impact to the day-to-day operations of the College during this recruitment process.

Midway through 5-year Strategic Plan (2008 – 2013)

The Board, as part of their established annual schedule, met on Thursday, June 16, 2011, to review the College's Strategic Plan, which is currently halfway through its 5 year cycle. The Strategic Plan is the primary tool used by the Board to direct the work of College staff and to communicate with all stakeholder groups, including registrants and the public, the *Vision, Mission, Values, Goals and Objectives* of the College.

The Board was pleased with the measurable accomplishments to date and satisfied with the continued direction as outlined in the current plan with only minor revisions required. Once these have been incorporated and approved by the Board at their September Board meeting, the revised Strategic Plan will be posted on the College website.

MMT Training Deadline: September 30

All pharmacists and pharmacy managers currently offering Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) services must, in order to be compliant with *Professional Practice Policy #66 (PPP-66) – Methadone Maintenance Treatment*, complete the mandatory training by September 30, 2011. Additionally, from October 1, 2011 onward, any pharmacist or pharmacy manager wanting to provide MMT services must successfully complete the training prior to offering the service.

As no live training sessions are currently planned, registrants who require the training will need to complete the online training module which can be accessed from the home page of the College website. The format of the online training is a pre-recorded PowerPoint presentation with audio, just over 1 hour in length and available 24/7 from any computer. No registration is required and participants can stop and start the session as necessary.

First Cycle of Assessment Component will test Computerized Format

...continued from page 3

Given that this technology is new however, the College will be using the first cycle (2012) of the Assessment component to test the computerized delivery of the exam to ensure that everything is running smoothly. Because of this, rather than randomly selecting 10% of registrants, who would have been notified this summer and required to sit the KA exam in the calendar year of 2012, the College will instead be calling for volunteers to participate in this first cycle of PDAP's Assessment component.

Early this fall, a general 'call for volunteers' will be communicated to all registrants and the College will accept, on a first come-first serve basis, up to approximately 500 participants, which is equal to the 10% allotment per year. The bonus for those registrants who volunteer to participate in the first Assessment cycle (2012) is should they be unsuccessful in the KA exam there are no consequences. Should they be successful however they will receive the program's 10-year cycle exemption, meaning that they will not be required to participate in the Assessment component of PDAP again until the 2022 cycle.

The Assessment component will run as originally planned with a number of exam dates and sites scheduled throughout the year. The difference is that following each exam sitting for this first cycle (2012) the College will incorporate feedback solicited from the volunteer participants with respect to any challenges they may have encountered regarding the technical delivery of the computerized format of the exam. By using this first cycle of the Assessment component as a test for this new technology, the College will ensure that the transition from a 'paper' to a 'computerized' exam will be as seamless as possible for participants who will be randomly selected for the 2013 cycle.

Graduating Class of 2011

At the annual Dean's Reception held Tuesday, May 31, 2011 honouring graduates from UBC's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Board Chair Randy Konrad acknowledged this future group of registrants by stating: *"the future of pharmacy is upon us and it's in this room today."*

He went on to challenge the grad class by saying: *"The most effective way to advance the profession of pharmacy is to improve patients' health, one patient at a time. You will have the opportunity to instill this expectation with each and every interaction you have in your new role. Take this important opportunity and responsibility and run with it."*

This year's class had a total of 138 graduates, and consistent with previous years, will make up approximately half of the total number of new pharmacists registered with the College in the fiscal year. The other half of registrants come from either other jurisdictions within Canada or from outside of the country.



UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Pharm. D graduates (2010 – 2011) posing for a photo after the Spring Graduation ceremony.

Photograph by June Chow



Alan Samuelson, Practice Consultant, College of Pharmacists of British Columbia

College staff member, Alan Samuelson, recognized by ACP

As part of the Alberta College of Pharmacist's (ACP) 2011 *Alberta Pharmacy Centennial Conference* held in Jasper on May 20 – 21, our very own Alan Samuelson, Practice Consultant for the College of Pharmacists of BC, was recognized as one of the 102 outstanding recipients of the Alberta Pharmacy Centennial Award of Distinction.

This once-in-a-century award recognizes the outstanding contributions of individuals who helped advance pharmacy practice in Alberta over the past century. Alan, a graduate from the University of Alberta in 1959 worked for many years in Alberta before moving to BC and was instrumental in recognizing and implementing necessary changes within hospital pharmacy. In particular, Alan played a key role in the implementation of the IV admixture program which, following years of meetings, was started in 1978, and the unit-dose system, which was phased in a few years later.

For the past decade, Alan, who will be retiring from the College at the end of this fiscal year (March 2012), has brought his years of passion and experience in hospital pharmacy to support and guide practitioners here in BC. Congratulations!



On Call



With the recent introduction of *Professional Practice Policy #66 (PPP-66) – Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT)*, which relates to mandatory training for all pharmacists and pharmacy managers who currently, or wish to, deliver MMT services in community pharmacies, a number of enquiries have been made regarding the treatment of methadone for pain, which is not part of the *PPP-66* policy. To address these questions, this issue of On Call has been dedicated to the topic of “Methadone for Pain”.

Q: How do I know if a methadone prescription is for pain?

A: If the methadone prescription is for pain control, the physician must clearly state this in the “sig” of the prescription.

NOTE: A prescription for methadone for pain must be written on the regular Controlled Prescription Form and not on the Methadone Maintenance Controlled Prescription Form which is restricted to the methadone maintenance program.

Q: Is there any quantity restriction when a methadone prescription is for pain?

A: No, when a methadone prescription is for pain, the full prescribed quantity may be given out, there are no quantity restrictions.

Q: Does the first dose of a methadone for pain prescription have to be witnessed by the pharmacist?

A: No, methadone for pain prescriptions do not have to be witnessed by the pharmacist.

Q: The physician ordered methadone 20 mg per mL for a methadone for pain patient. Is this strength allowed?

A: Yes, higher strengths are allowed for patients receiving methadone for pain.

Q: A physician ordered methadone 10 mg per mL for a methadone for pain patient. The patient wants the methadone to be dispensed in pure water, is this acceptable?

A: Yes, when you are dispensing methadone for pain, the prescription can be dispensed in pure water when requested by the patient.

Q: A physician ordered a 2 month supply of methadone for pain, for a patient that is going on holidays. The patient cannot swallow methadone tablets so the physician has ordered methadone 10mg/mL. How can I prevent bacterial growth in the solution?

A: Preservatives that can be added to prevent bacterial growth include a combination of methylparaben 0.5g/L and propylparaben 0.2g/L. If possible, the finished product should be stored in the refrigerator.

Q: Is it appropriate for a pharmacist to divulge the name of a physician that has an exemption to prescribe methadone for pain or maintenance?

A: No. It is a breach of the physician’s privacy to divulge his/her name to a patient seeking methadone for either pain or maintenance. The patient should be advised to consult with their family physician or directed to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC’s website (www.cpsbc.ca) which has a public listing of Methadone Clinics.



Practice Matters

ALERT – Sinemet CR 200/50 no longer scored for half-tablet dosing

Pharmacists are reminded that the new Sinemet CR 200/50 tablets are no longer scored for half-tablet dosing. Sinemet CR should only be administered as whole tablets. To maintain the controlled release properties of the product, tablets should not be chewed or crushed. The College has had a report of an overdose of Sinemet CR 200/50 which occurred as a result of a patient splitting the newly formatted tablet in half like they used to with the old formulation, even though the half tablet was not prescribed. Please ensure you counsel your patients not to split their Sinemet CR 200/50 tablets.

PPP-29 – Triazolam Dispensing Guidelines rescinded by College Board

The College Board, at their June meeting, responding to a monograph change supported by Health Canada and with confirmation from manufacturers that the higher strength tablets (0.5mg and 1.0mg) have been discontinued, approved rescinding *Professional Practice Policy #29 (PPP-29) – Triazolam Dispensing Guidelines* effective immediately.

Ensuring your Narcotic Count and Reconciliation is accurate!

As outlined in *Professional Practice Policy #65 (PPP-65) – Narcotic Counts and Reconciliations* the pharmacy manager must ensure that narcotic counts and reconciliations are completed at a minimum of every 3 months, after a change in manager and after a break-in or robbery. Given the reality of the increase in incidents of drug diversion the importance of ensuring the accuracy of your narcotic counts and reconciliations is more important than ever.

During routine pharmacy site visits College inspectors have discovered that the procedure that a number of pharmacies have incorporated to conduct their narcotic counts and reconciliations is to simply count the physical quantity on-hand and compare it to the electronic count documented in the computer system and reconcile any discrepancies. Although this is an important step in the process, this, in and of itself, does not meet the requirement.

The actual 'ins' (invoices, stock transfers, etc.), 'outs' (prescriptions, stock transfers, etc.), and any adjustments to the electronic records must be compared and reconciled. It is essential that any adjustments to the electronic quantities are recorded with the rationale documented.

In addition, the Narcotic Drug Sales report should be run with a random audit conducted which compares a number of the original (hard copy) prescriptions to what was actually processed on the report. The original prescription should be verified as to existence, validity and quantity with any discrepancies that cannot be rationally reconciled, investigated. (Note: the loss or theft of controlled drugs and substances must be reported to Health Canada within 10 days.)

Online training to support revised Code

As previously communicated, the Code, which had not been updated for over 15 years, was revised to reflect enhancements to registrants' scope of practice and ensure that College standards, with respect to professional and ethical conduct, were reflective and supportive of current pharmacy practice.

Although there are not significant changes from the previous Code, the revised documents do provide a broader ethical foundation and greater clarity for practitioners. To assist registrants in understanding and applying this updated legislation, which is now in effect, the Board has mandated training support and a simple, yet comprehensive, online training module is currently under development and will be available this fall.

The College's newly revised Code of Ethics and accompanying documents; Conflict of Interest Standards and Model for Ethical Decision-Making will be posted on the College website (*Legislation and Standards/Provincial Legislation/Bylaws/Schedule A*) shortly.



CSHP's Summer Educational Sessions held in Vancouver

The Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists (CSHP) will be hosting their 64th Annual Summer Educational Sessions at the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre Hotel, August 6 through 9. The event, themed *Ocean's 2011*, provides a diverse program of educational sessions designed to inform, educate and motivate practitioners. College Registrar Marshall Moleschi will be participating in a Plenary Session on Sunday August 7th from 8:30am to 10:00am entitled *Technician Regulation: A Gamble or Sure Bet?*

Pre-registration for the event is now closed but those interested in attending can registrar onsite at the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre Hotel starting Saturday, August 6th. For more event information, including a preliminary program, go to www.cshp.ca and click on 'events'.

First Pharmacy Technician Registrants

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The process for regulating pharmacy technicians, which is on a voluntary basis and following national standards, will continue to be a gradual one with up to 100 technicians expected this year and 100 – 200 more next year.

PLEASE NOTE that 'Pharmacy Technician' is now a restricted title and therefore reserved for only those who have successfully completed the regulation process and registered with the College of Pharmacists of BC. Other non-regulated dispensary personnel are to be referenced using other designations such as dispensary or pharmacy assistants.

Photo of Inaugural Group of Pharmacy Technicians present at Celebration Event: Back row, from left to right: Randy Konrad (Board Chair), Phillip Dunn, Onnolee Osbourne, Cheryl Knight, Hua Ma, Jody Penner, Edeana Vivian, Sorell Wellon, Roberta Wiebe, Marshall Moleschi (Registrar), Bob Nakagawa (Assistant Deputy Minister) Front row, from left to right: Sukhjit Bains, Darlene Bonnier, Ricky Brar, Bonnie M. Hill, Yonette Harrod, Michael Higashi



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The ReadLinks newsletter provides important College and pharmacy practice information. All registrants are expected to be aware of these matters.



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OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Safe and Effective Pharmacy Care

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Registrar – Marshall Moleschi

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