



Pharmacists learning from pharmacists

A program developed by the
College of Pharmacists of British Columbia
to help members share their skills and knowledge



Introducing MentorLink

Welcome to MentorLink, a program developed by the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia to help pharmacists learn from one another.

Staying up-to-date is always challenging but with MentorLink it just got a bit easier! MentorLink is simple and straightforward to use and can serve as an excellent supplement to the courses you take, the conferences you attend, and the reading you do.

Through MentorLink you can improve or enhance your knowledge and skills by working with another pharmacist, someone who has been specially trained as a mentor. Working with this pharmacist, you can focus on one specific issue or address an entire area of your practice. The choice is yours.

One-on-one mentoring or coaching has been found to be a highly effective and motivational tool to promote the development of new knowledge and skills. This is why mentoring programs are being used across Canada and around the world. These programs enable experienced practitioners to share their knowledge and skills with others through professional partnerships that focus on the application of learning to practice.

Staying current is key to being an effective pharmacist. Through MentorLink you have an exciting new opportunity to be as effective and as up-to-date as possible.

learning never ends...learning never ends...learning never ends...

Benefits of MentorLink

MentorLink provides:

- A unique opportunity for you to receive professional support from an experienced, specially trained and highly respected BC pharmacist
- A highly flexible and tailor-made approach to help you achieve the new knowledge and skills you want and/or to enhance your practice
- An effective supplement to your many other learning activities

Who is MentorLink for?

Although any BC pharmacist can use MentorLink, the program may be particularly useful to newly qualified pharmacists, those arriving from another province or country, pharmacists who are returning to practice after an absence or those interested in exploring new areas of practice.

How does MentorLink work?

There are three steps in the MentorLink program, you:

1. Identify what you want to learn
2. Link up with your mentor and set specific learning and/or practice goals
3. Carry out relevant learning activities

Here's how each step works:

1. Complete a self-assessment and identify what you want to learn

To identify what you want to learn, you need to assess yourself. You need to be clear about your knowledge and skills—your strengths—and identify any gaps or limitations. You can then identify the areas of your practice you want most to develop or enhance.

You can do this by using the Self-Assessment Form associated with the College's Professional Development and Assessment Program (PDAP) or any other self-assessment process that you find useful. If you use the latter, you need to make sure that it can be related to the BC standards of practice as described in the Framework of Professional Practice (FPP).

You will want to think about your practice and the clients you serve. To help clarify the areas in which you want or need to improve, consider the following questions:

- What do my clients or practice need that I am not able to provide right now?
- What do I want to do better?
- What trends or changes do I envision in my practice or community over the next few years?
- Am I prepared to handle these trends or changes? If not, what can I do now to prepare myself?

Once you have a clear idea of your strengths and limitations, you are ready to move on to the next step.

learning never ends...learning never ends...learning never ends...

2. Link up with your mentor and set specific learning and/or practice goals

A. Link up with your mentor

To link up with a mentor, complete the MentorLink Application Form (www.bcpharmacists.org) describing your background and the areas in which you would like to improve or enhance in your practice and why, and submit your completed form and fee to the College office.

Your completed form will be reviewed and a suitable trained mentor will be identified for you based on the areas you have outlined. In all cases, your mentor will be a practising BC pharmacist and a recognized leader in one or more of these areas. He/she will be eager to share and support you to the best of his/her ability.

B. Set specific learning and/or practice goals

Within three weeks, your mentor will contact you and arrange a convenient time to speak with you in person, by phone or through email. The purpose of this initial contact will be to identify and clarify your learning and/or practice goals and to ensure that he/she feels able to provide the support you want.

C. Letter of Agreement

Once you and the mentor agree on your goal(s), you will need to complete the Letter of Agreement - Parts A and B in which you and your mentor commit to an appropriate plan of action. This Letter of Agreement should be faxed or sent to the College by you or your mentor. It will be kept on file until the mentoring process is complete. A final section, Part C, of this Letter of Agreement will need to be completed once the mentoring process is concluded.

3. Carry out relevant learning activities

After your Letter of Agreement is signed, you will have up to 10 hours over a two-month period to work with your mentor to reach your goal. The support your mentor provides will vary depending on your individual needs. In some cases you may meet face-to-face, he/she may visit you in your practice or you may primarily speak with your mentor by phone or communicate by e-mail. You and your mentor will need to determine the most suitable means of communicating.

During this time, you will be expected to carry out the work and learning activities you have agreed to, provide regular updates to your mentor, and discuss any problems or issues that emerge.

The Role of the Mentor

During the period when you are carrying out your learning activities, you will need to let your mentor know how you are progressing. Periodically, your mentor may check in with you too. He/she may ask questions about your learning activities and/or ask you to evaluate your own progress. Based on these discussions, you and your mentor may want to meet again, identify new learning opportunities, or even set new or different goals. In these latter cases, you will need to complete and amend your Letter of Agreement and forward it to the College office.

Once you and your mentor believe you have met your goal, you will be asked to complete Part C of the Letter of Agreement and submit it to the College office. Receipt of this will be notification to the College that the mentoring process is complete.

learning never ends...learning never ends...learning never ends...

Frequently asked questions:

1. How much does MentorLink cost?

MentorLink costs \$525(\$500 plus GST) and any additional travel expenses if your mentor visits you in your practice. Your payment should be made payable to the College of Pharmacists of BC at the time you complete the initial Application Form.

2. How much time will my mentor be able to give me?

Your mentor will be available for up to 10 hours over a two-month period. You and your mentor can determine how best to utilize this time. You may reach your goal in less time; on the other hand, it may take more time. If the latter occurs, you will need to complete a second Application Form, submit a second fee, and complete the MentorLink process again.

3. What responsibility does my mentor have for my success?

Only you have responsibility for your success. Your mentor is there to support and help you in any way he/she can. But the ultimate success of your experience rests with you, just as it does when you take a course, do an on-line search, or attend a conference.

4. What are my responsibilities?

Your responsibilities include:

- completing a self-assessment linked to the Framework of Professional Practice (FPP)
- completing the application form
- submitting the applicable fee(s)
- setting specific goals and developing and implementing a learning plan with your mentor
- completing and submitting the Letter of Agreement
- being responsive to your mentor's questions and suggestions, and
- having valid pharmacist's professional liability coverage.

Most of all, you are responsible for taking an active role in making sure you reach your goal. The Letter of Agreement provides a Summary of Responsibilities for you and your mentor.

5. Suppose my mentor and I don't get along?

If you and your mentor do not get along, or you are not comfortable working with a particular person, please contact the College office. Each situation will be handled on a case by case basis. The College may contact your mentor in order to clarify any concerns and make appropriate recommendations. If necessary, every effort will be made to locate a second mentor for you.

learning never ends...learning never ends...learning never ends...

6. What happens if I don't reach my goal(s)?

If you don't reach your goal(s), you and your mentor will explore the reasons why. Together you and your mentor can complete Part C of the Letter of Agreement. You will have the option to either end the mentoring process or begin again with the same or a different mentor.

7. Is MentorLink part of the Professional Development and Assessment Program (PDAP)?

MentorLink is not part of the Professional Development and Assessment Program (PDAP). It is a College program open to all BC pharmacists and those wanting to licence in BC. However, some pharmacists who have not met the standard in PDAP may wish to or be required to participate in MentorLink as part of the PDAP process to help them meet the practice standards as described in the Framework of Professional Practice (FPP).

To make best use of MentorLink to meet *your* learning needs, complete the Application Form provided.

If you have further questions about MentorLink, please contact
The College of Pharmacists of B.C. office
604.733.2440 or toll free 800.663.1940



learning never ends...learning never ends...learning never ends...