College of Pharmacists
of British Columbia

PRACTICE REVIEW PROGRAM

Product Distribution (Hospital)

Product Distribution

The *Health Professions Act* (HPA) bylaws require specific steps to be taken when a prescription is prepared and checked.

As a pharmacy professional, it is your duty and responsibility to make sure prescriptions are prepared with the ***right product*** and checked for accuracy.

The *very first step* in product distribution is product preparation—be sure you have the ***right product***. Preparing the prescription product correctly is a critical step in ensuring product distribution and patient safety is maintained.

Product Preparation

When preparing a prescription product, you must first ensure you select the correct drug product. This includes making sure the prescription product label ***matches*** the product information with regards to the following information:

- Drug
- Dosage Form
- Strength
- Quantity
- Drug Identification Number (DIN) ***(outpatient prescriptions only)***

In addition, the product's ***expiry date*** must be checked to ensure that it is not expired and will not expire within the duration of use specified on the prescription.

It is important to adopt a consistent process when preparing a prescription product to ensure all requirements are met. Each pharmacy professional may have a slightly different process, but consistency in one's own process can prevent a careless oversight or error.

For prescriptions dispensed to staff, outpatients or the general public, pharmacy professionals must label and dispense these drugs according to the *Community Pharmacy Standards of Practice (HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 1)*. In the case of product preparation, this includes ensuring the prescription product label matches the information on the prescription with respect to *HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 1 – Section 6(2)(a) to (g)*.

HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 1 - Section 6(2)(a) to (g) states:

6(2) Upon receipt from the practitioner, a prescription must include the following information:

(a) the **date** the prescription was written;
(b) the name of the **patient**;
(c) the name of the **drug** or ingredients and **strength** if applicable;
(d) the **quantity** of the drug;
(e) the **dosage instructions** including the frequency, interval or maximum daily dose;
(f) **refill authorization** if applicable, including number of refills and interval between refills;
(g) in the case of a written prescription, the **name and signature of the practitioner**;

Final Check

Once a product has been prepared, a pharmacy professional must then perform a final check and record his or her identity in writing. While pharmacy professionals can prepare and check their own work (except in the case of sterile compounding), an independent double check can help reduce errors with a different set of eyes reviewing the prescription product.

The final check of a prescription includes ensuring:

- The prescription product label ***matches the product information*** (as outlined above in product preparation)
- The ***drug is not expired*** and will not expire within the duration of use
- A ***pharmacist*** has completed a ***clinical assessment*** of the prescription after reviewing the patient profile
- The prescription product label ***matches the information on the prescription*** ***(Outpatient Prescriptions Only)***

The different steps of the final check can be performed at separate times by separate people, but it is important to clearly document the identity of each pharmacy professional involved along each step of the way.

Who can complete this activity?

	Pharmacist	Pharmacy Technician
Product Preparation	√	√
Final Check	√	√
Clinical Assessment (as part of Final Check)	√	

If a pharmacy professional ***prepares*** a product, they must include written confirmation of their identity. In addition, the pharmacy professional that performs the ***final check*** must also include written confirmation of their identity. This documentation must be in writing, readily available, and retained for at least three years after the date on which the prescription product was last dispensed.

For more information, please refer to: HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 1 Section 6, and 9.1, as well as HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 2 Section 3.1, 4, 17, and the definitions section for "final check".

Why is this a fundamental standard?

Case in point:

Each year the College of Pharmacists of BC receives complaints regarding medication dispensing errors by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. These include complaints regarding:

- Patients receiving the incorrect medication or strength of medication;
- Prescription labels containing incorrect information, or information inconsistent with the original prescription;
- Patients receiving the incorrect quantity of medication;
- Patients receiving an expired medication;
- Patients receiving medications which were incorrectly compounded; and
- Pharmacists not identifying drug interactions and/or documented allergy information, resulting in adverse effects for the patient.

In almost all of these situations, careful product preparation and an adequate final check could have prevented these errors from occurring.

http://www.bcpharmacists.org/readlinks/pharmacy-matters-taking-accountability-and-following-dispensing-errors

http://www.bcpharmacists.org/readlinks/pharmacy-matters-reducing-errors-and-increase-patient-safety-following-standards-practice

Being vigilant when preparing prescription products and performing a careful final check is a fundamental principle to ensure that patients receive the ***right product*** with the ***right prescription information***.