

Collegial communication with pharmacists ensures patients receive their medication in a timely manner



The primary objective of the drug programs department at the College is to ensure and enhance safe prescribing. A potential weak link in the chain of multidisciplinary care of patients is the handoff from one clinician to another, which occurs each time a physician writes a prescription for a patient and engages a pharmacist colleague in that patient's care.

Good health care requires strict and precise transfer of information from one clinician to the next. Collegial collaboration and effective communication between care providers is crucial. Fortunately, this can all be accomplished if physicians adhere to the following simple yet essential points when writing prescriptions.

Schedule F Part 1 of the [College of Pharmacists of British Columbia \(CPBC\) bylaws](#) sets out required information for all prescriptions.

Section 6 states that prescriptions must include:

- the date of the prescription
- the name of the patient
- the name of the drug or ingredients and strength if applicable
- the quantity of the drug
- the dosage instructions including the frequency, interval or maximum daily dose
- refill authorization, if applicable, including number of refills and interval between refills
- the name of the practitioner and their signature
- the identification number from the practitioner's regulatory college (CPSID, not billing number) is helpful to enable pharmacists to identify the physician in PharmaNet

Section 7 requires that all prescriptions received **by fax** also include:

- the practitioner's telephone number, fax number and unique identifier
- the time and date of the transmission
- the name and fax number of the pharmacy intended to receive the transmission

The inclusion of the above information allows pharmacists to verify that the prescription has been faxed directly from the prescriber and to confirm that they are the intended recipient. Registrants can consider including this information on fax cover pages or by setting up their fax machines to display some of these components in the transmission line (i.e. physician's fax number, unique identifier, etc.).

Registrants are reminded that they can now (due to the current public health emergencies) fax or phone pharmacists with prescriptions for drugs that fall under the Controlled Prescription Program (duplicate prescriptions), but pharmacies are still required to receive the original duplicate prescription forms.

Further information regarding the requirements for duplicate prescriptions can be found [here](#).

This collegial communication with pharmacist colleagues ensures patients receive their medication in a timely manner. By ensuring that each prescription meets the mandatory requirements of the CPBC bylaws, registrants can do much to ensure patient safety.