



Ontario College  
of Pharmacists

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# UNDER STRESS AND DURESS

*The prevalence and impact of corporate influence on  
pharmacy professional autonomy and wellbeing:  
An analysis of OCP registrant survey and town hall responses*



June 2024



# Message from the Registrar and CEO

*OCP, the regulator of Ontario’s pharmacies, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, has heard from registrants over the past several years about their concerns over demands and expectations placed on them to provide services at higher and higher volumes, with what appeared to be less of a focus on patient interests and more on profit.*

In March 2024 we set out, through a survey and virtual town hall meetings, to more fully understand directly from pharmacy professionals whether they had experienced, or were experiencing, pressures from corporate ownership to provide services in conditions that they felt might require them to compromise their professional obligations.

What we heard is compelling. Registrants told us that not only are corporate pressures real, but they were also prevalent throughout the province, they were impacting the quality of care they want to provide to their patients, they were antithetical to the essence of healthcare professionals, and they were having an impact on their wellbeing and mental health.

The feedback we received from pharmacy professionals also showed frustration with a system that has not acted well or quickly enough to address these concerns. But what we heard also reminded me of why pharmacy professionals are one of the most trusted healthcare professionals. That pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have come forward to share their experiences with us is a testament to their desire to bring about change so that they can continue to provide the kind of care that they want to deliver as healthcare professionals, and that Ontarians deserve.

This report, “Under Stress and Duress”, is a deeper analysis of the feedback we heard through our registrant survey and town halls, which was initially shared with the Board in March 2024 and led to the Board’s declaration of zero-tolerance for corporate pressures in pharmacy. The additional quantitative and qualitative analyses included in this report provide insights that bring to life – with power and clarity – what we’ve been hearing over the past several years.

This information, along with ongoing insights being shared from the profession since March 2024 is instrumental in our work to act against business practices that get in the way of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians meeting their professional and ethical obligations.

I want to thank the thousands of pharmacy professionals who bravely shared their experiences with us. Their willingness to call attention to the issue of corporate pressures demonstrates their commitment to patient-centred care and to fulfilling their important role as trusted members of their patients’ healthcare teams.

**Shenda Tanchak**  
*Registrar and CEO*

# FORWARD: Pharmacy Professionals are increasingly concerned about corporate pressures

*Over the past several years, registrants – primarily those within the community pharmacy sector that work at corporate-owned pharmacies – have expressed concerns about an increasingly stressful workplace environment that does not consistently allow them to deliver the kind of care they want to provide to their patients as healthcare professionals or allow them to work in a way that supports their wellbeing.*

In 2020, OCP worked with system partners including pharmacy staff, owners/operators and patients, to develop a set of shared accountability principles intended to help promote a pharmacy practice environment for professionals that enabled them to consistently deliver quality, ethical care to their patients. However, despite the development of these principles, it was becoming increasingly apparent that the concerns expressed previously by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians had not abated.

In 2023, OCP developed a new strategic plan that established new organizational values and regulatory principles, as well as a set of four new strategic goals that would guide its work through to 2028. The first of these goals was aimed at addressing the ongoing concern of corporate pressure on pharmacy professionals. Strategic Goal 1 states: *“Regardless of pharmacy setting, management and business exigencies do not compromise the health and well-being of pharmacy professionals or impede their ability to adhere to the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.”*



## A TIPPING POINT, AND AN OPPORTUNITY

As OCP began to map out the research needed to move forward with this first strategic goal, a groundswell of concerns from pharmacy professionals throughout the province in early 2024, prompted initially by specific concerns about corporate-driven pressure to achieve volume targets for MedsCheck reviews, compelled OCP to accelerate its work on Strategic Goal 1.

To promptly determine the prevalence of corporate pressures on pharmacists and the impact these pressures have on the profession and patients, a series of information-gathering strategies were initiated targeting pharmacists and pharmacy technicians throughout the province. In March 2024, OCP launched an anonymous registrant survey and a series of virtual town hall meetings that allowed participants to provide OCP with open, direct and honest input regarding their experience with corporate pressures in community pharmacy without fear of potential employer reprisal for sharing concerns with us.

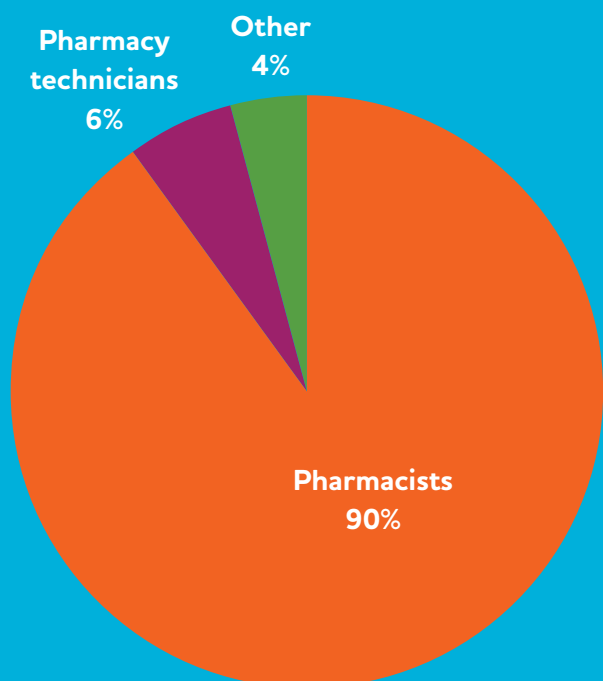
The anonymous survey generated 4,310 responses. After removing 21 responses that were fully incomplete, a final total of 4,289 responses were received and used in OCP's analyses. Of those, 90% were from registered pharmacists, 6% from pharmacy technicians, and 4%

from "other" (e.g., pharmacy students, pharmacy assistants). Approximately one-third of all pharmacy professionals in Ontario currently working for a corporate owned pharmacy responded to the survey. The survey also attracted comments from over 1600 respondents, many of which touched on multiple issues. As a result, we received a substantial amount of rich data for the survey's qualitative analysis.

OCP also hosted four one-hour virtual town halls which attracted approximately 1,300 participants who provided almost 2,600 complete written comments and more than 100 verbal comments. No demographic data was collected.

No other series of surveys or town halls in OCP's recent history has generated more participation from pharmacy professionals than these recent activities.

### REGISTRANT SURVEY RESPONSES



# 4289

Registrant survey responses

# 4300

Comments received through the registrant survey and town halls



# FINDINGS, PART 1: Quantitative Analysis (Survey)



## HOW MANY REGISTRANTS ARE AFFECTED?

Eighty-five percent of those registrants who responded to our survey indicated that they are **either currently experiencing or have previously experienced** workplace practices that include direction or pressure to complete an activity in a limited timeframe or to a certain target number or dollar amount (practice quotas). Seventy percent of respondents indicated that they are **currently experiencing** these workplace pressures.

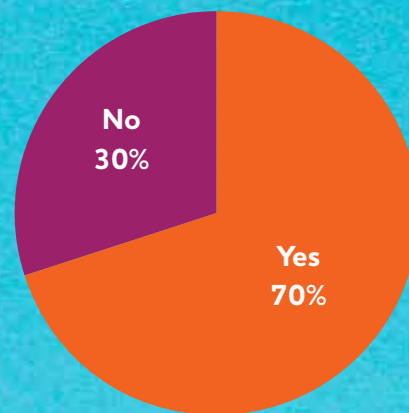
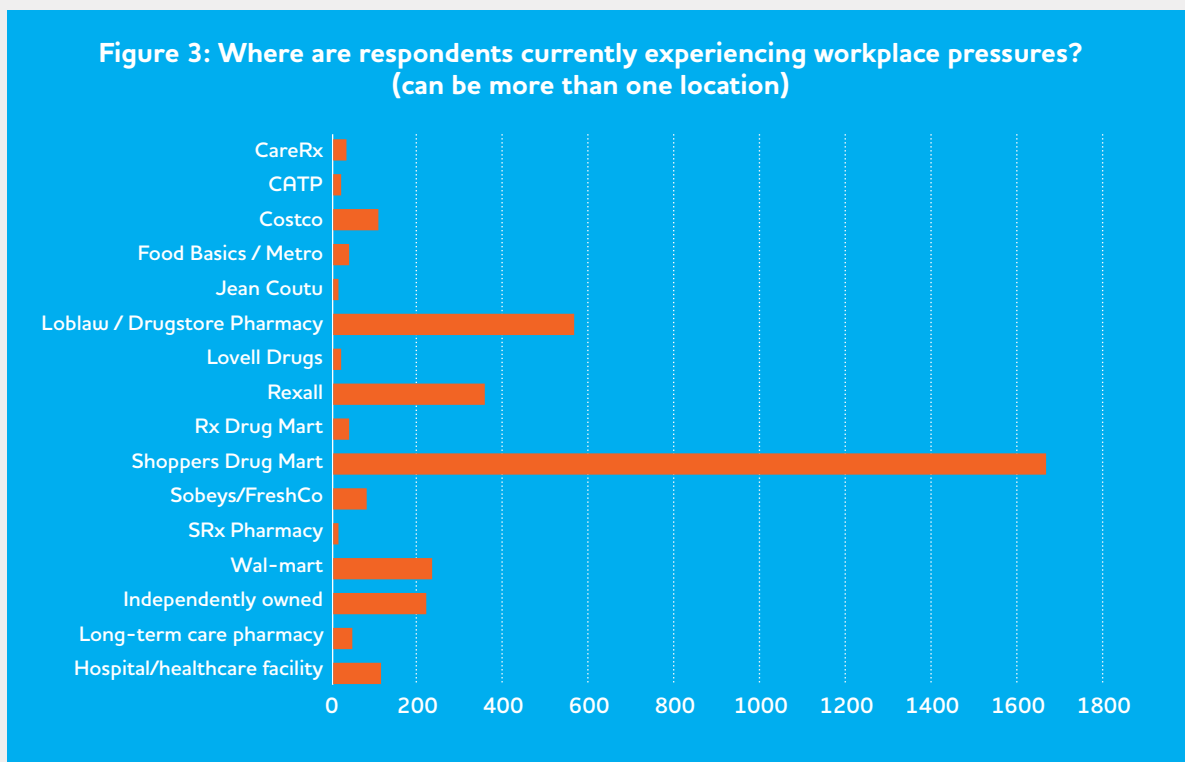
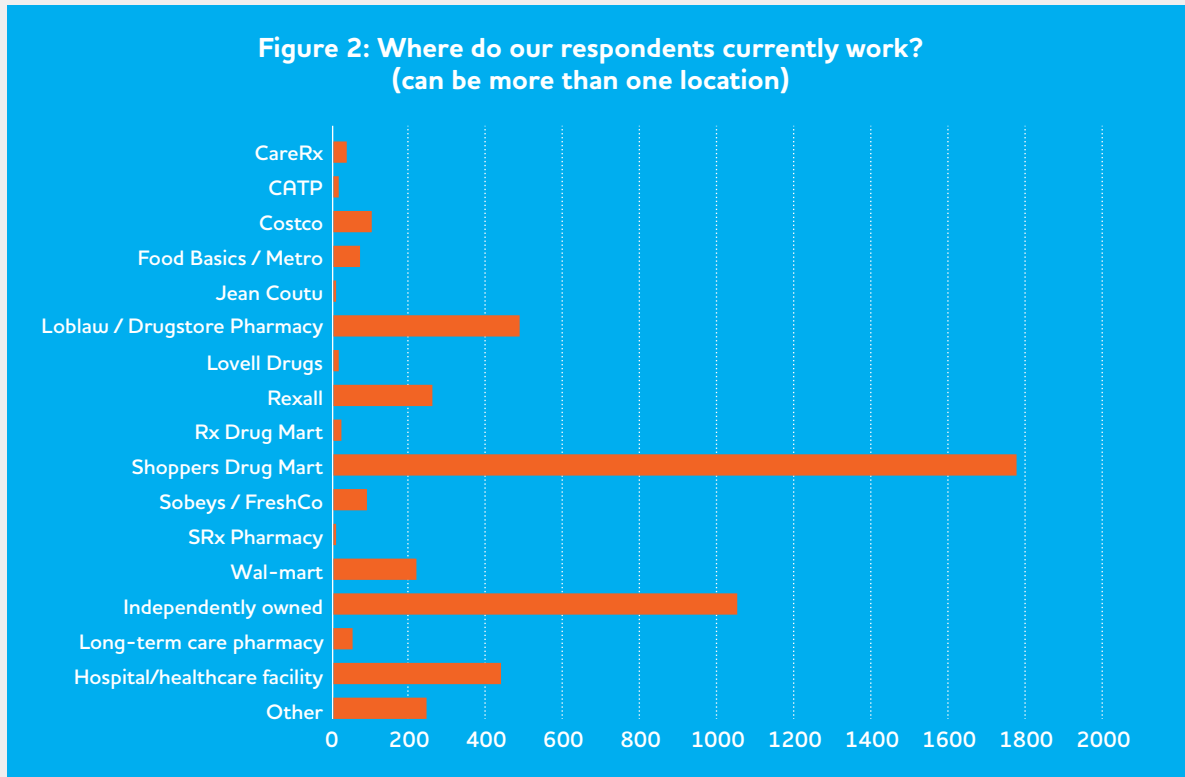


Figure 1: Respondents who report currently experiencing workplace pressures

## WHERE IS THIS HAPPENING?

### CURRENTLY

The following figures show absolute numbers of where all survey respondents currently practice (Figure 2). For those respondents indicating they currently experience workplace pressures, we asked them to tell us where they are currently experiencing them (Figure 3). Respondents were allowed to indicate more than one place of work or location of workplace pressure.



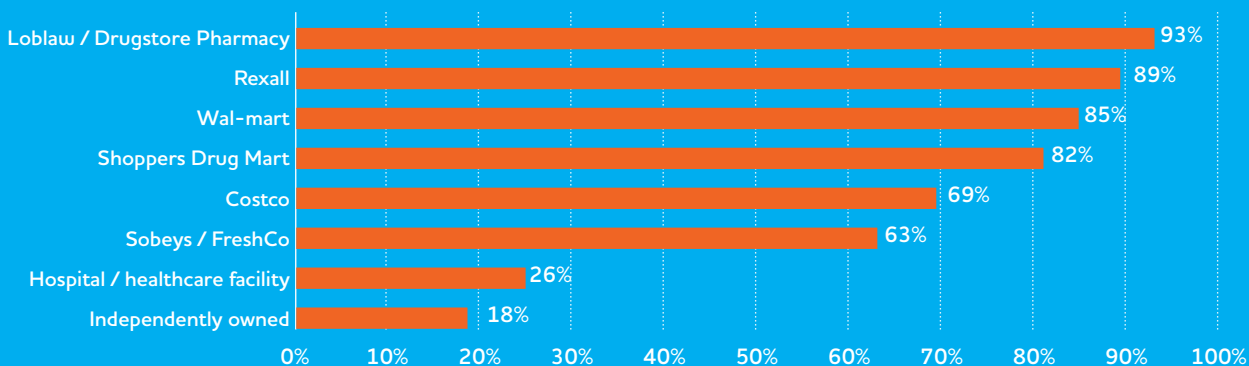
**Key points that stand out when comparing these figures:**

- The highest number of survey respondents (1781) indicated they currently work at a Shoppers Drug Mart, followed by Independently owned pharmacies (1051) and Loblaw Drugstore/Pharmacy (474).
- A high number of those who work at Shoppers Drug Mart, Loblaw/Drugstore Pharmacy and Rexall are currently experiencing workplace pressures – reflecting, at least in part, the high number of survey responses from pharmacists working at these locations.
- Conversely, a much lower number of those that work at independent pharmacies and hospital/healthcare facilities are currently experiencing workplace pressures.

To get a clearer picture as to whether certain workplaces are over-represented among those pharmacies where workplace pressures occur, we completed an analysis based on rates (percentages), rather than on absolute numbers.

Figure 4 depicts the percentage of respondents who are experiencing workplace pressures for each place of practice. To create an accurate percentage, for this particular analysis responses indicating multiple workplaces (n=915) were removed.<sup>1</sup> In addition, workplaces with fewer than 40 respondents were removed. Thus, CareRx (21), CATP (8), Food Basics Metro (30), Jean Coutu (7), Long-term care pharmacy (27), Lovell Drugs (13), Rx Drug Mart (15) and SRx Pharmacy (7) are not reported<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 4: Percentage of respondents indicating experience of workplace pressures at select pharmacies out of the total number of respondents who indicate currently working at that pharmacy (multiple places of work removed)**



Based on the subset of responses in our registrant survey where more than 40 respondents indicated a corporate pharmacy as their primary place of work, the top four corporate-owned pharmacies where workplace pressures are occurring are (in order):

1. Loblaw / Drugstore Pharmacy"
2. Rexall
3. Wal-Mart and
4. Shopper's Drug Mart.

We also heard from many respondents experiencing workplace pressures at Costco and Sobeys pharmacies, but their proportions were significantly lower than the highest four noted above. Pharmacy professionals responding to our survey who work at hospital/healthcare facility pharmacies or at independently owned pharmacies reported the lowest percentages of workplace pressures. Additional research is needed to understand whether the workplace pressures being experienced at each type of pharmacy are similar or different.

<sup>1</sup> Please see the methodological note in Appendix 1 for greater detail.

<sup>2</sup> Corporate pharmacies with low responses (such as CareRx or Jean Coutou) would disproportionately skew the findings of where most workplace pressures are taking place – especially since the low number of respondents from these pharmacies reflected very low percentages of the total number of Ontario pharmacists working there (not shown).



## WHERE IS THIS HAPPENING?

### PREVIOUSLY

In addition to what pharmacy professionals are currently experiencing in practice, we also wanted to understand whether certain Pharmacy professionals had **previously** experienced workplace pressures and where, and possibly changed jobs/workplaces for this reason.

**Table 1: Distribution of responses indicating when workplace pressures were previously experienced**

When asked when these workplace pressures were experienced, most respondents (48%) indicated they experienced them within the last two years.

TIMEFRAME	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS
Within the last 2 years	48%
3 to 5 years ago	30%
6 to 10 years ago	16%
More than 10 years ago	6%

**Figure 6: Where did respondents previously experience these workplace pressures? (can be more than one location)**

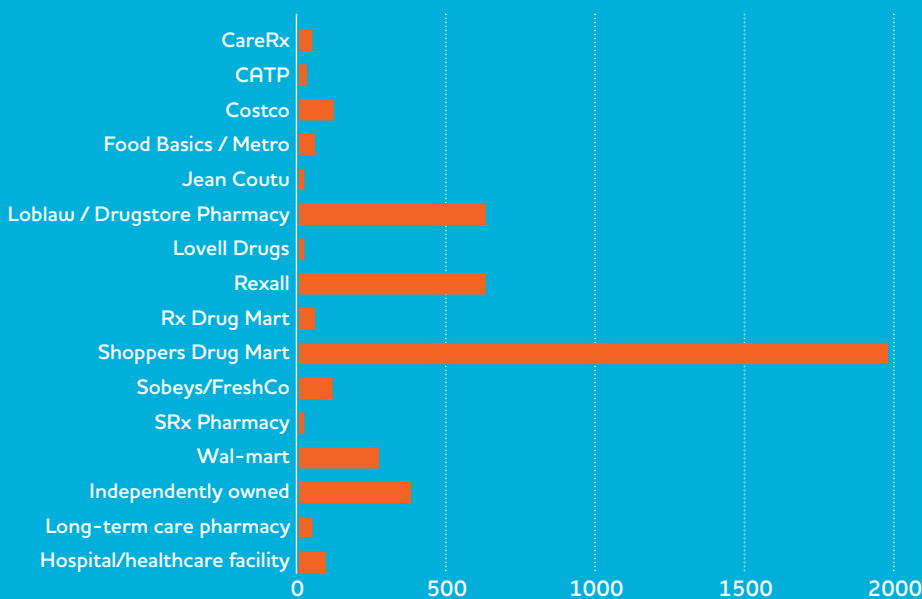


Figure 6 shows the absolute numbers of pharmacies where respondents previously experienced workplace pressures. Similar to the figures regarding current experience, Figure 6 shows that a high number of those who previously worked at Shoppers Drug Mart, Loblaw/ Drugstore Pharmacy and Rexall experienced workplace pressures while working there.



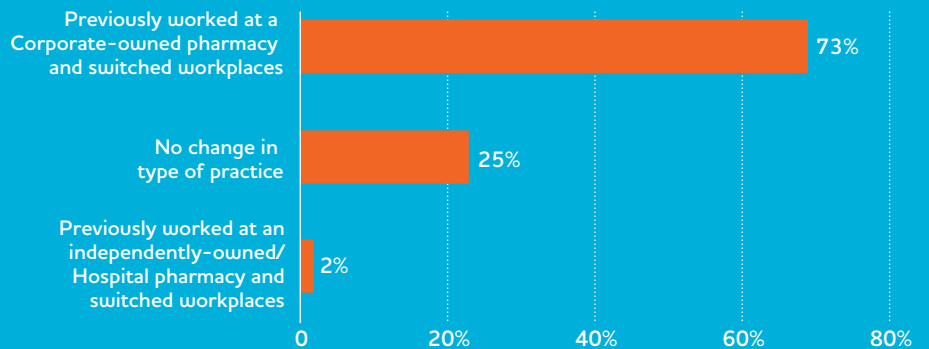
Figure 7 shows the previous workplace of those who indicated they previously experienced workplace pressures and are no longer experiencing them<sup>3</sup> and whether that respondent changed workplaces. Those with multiple workplaces were excluded in this analysis. Only those with a single workplace previously and currently were included, resulting in a total denominator of 537.

In this sample,

# 73%

of respondents who were previously employed at a corporate workplace and reported they are no longer experiencing workplace pressures have switched to a different type of workplace.

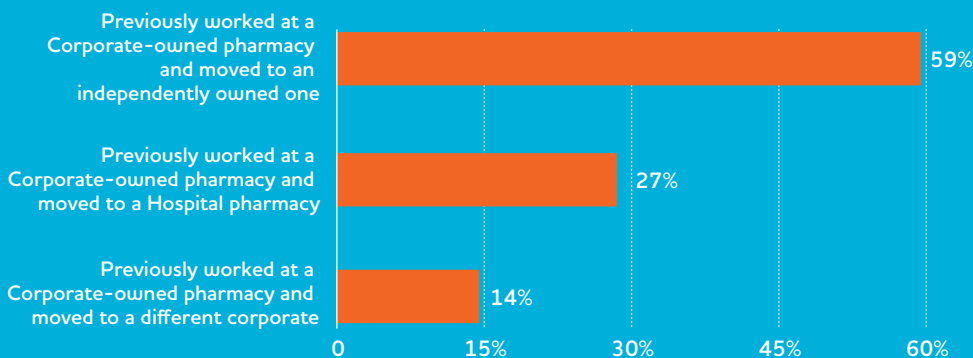
**Figure 7: Percent distribution of practice location changes of those who previously experienced, but are not currently experiencing workplace pressures (one workplace)**



Greater detail on where these respondents switched to is shown below in Figure 8. It is important to note that the reason(s) for switching workplaces are generally multiple and varied. The existence of workplace pressures correlates with the switch in 75%<sup>4</sup> of this sample's response, but it did not necessarily cause it.

The next figure (Figure 8) shows a breakdown of the top bar in Figure 7: those who previously worked at corporate owned pharmacies, identifying the type of practice to which these respondents moved. Eighty-six percent of respondents in this group left corporate pharmacies for independently owned or hospital pharmacies, compared to only 14% moving from one corporate pharmacy to another. Though the overall number of responses is low, it confirms an important trend that the College has been hearing about anecdotally.

**Figure 8: Percent distribution of current practice location of respondents no longer experiencing work pressures, who previously worked at a corporate owned pharmacy and experienced workplace pressures there (one workplace only)**



# 86%

of respondents in this group left corporate pharmacies for independently owned or hospital pharmacies, compared to **only 14% moving** from one corporate pharmacy to another.

<sup>3</sup> "yes" to previously experiencing workplace pressures (question 6) and "no" to currently experiencing workplace pressures (question 2).

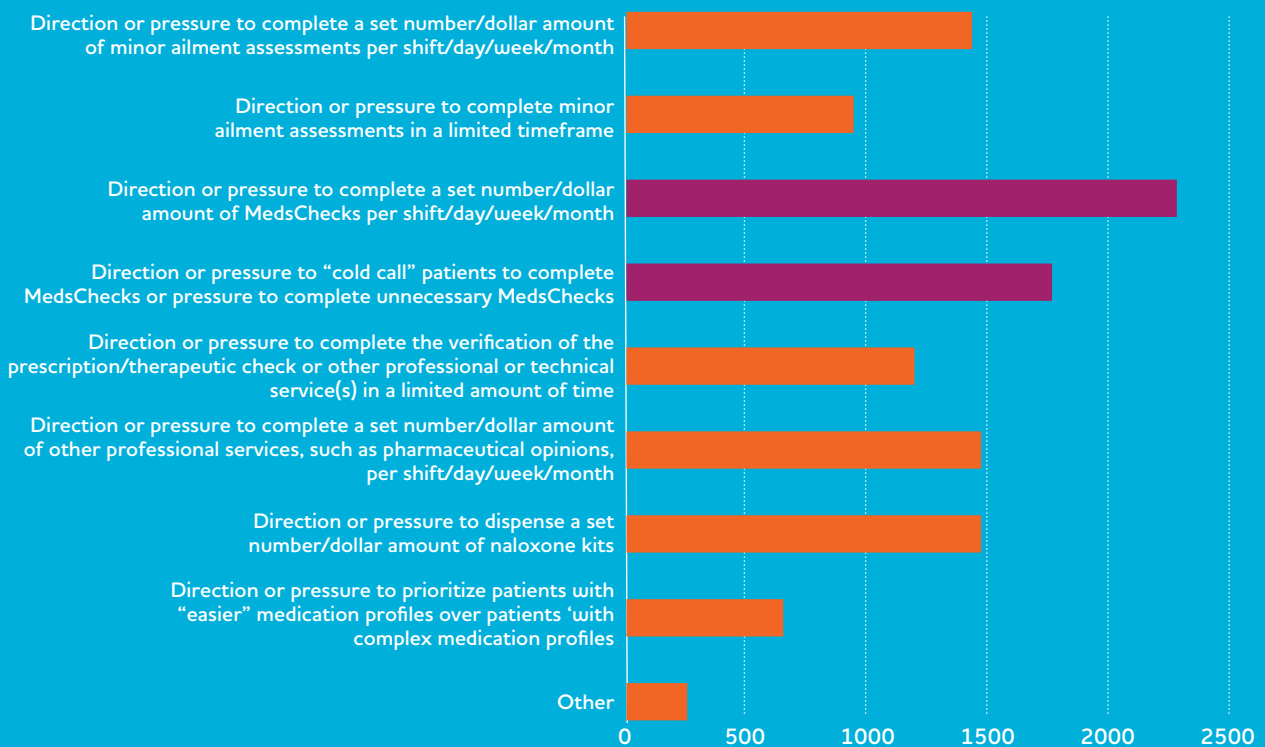
<sup>4</sup> 73% switched away from corporates and 2% switched away from independent owned pharmacies.

## WHAT TYPE OF WORKPLACE PRACTICES / PRESSURES ARE BEING EXPERIENCED?

The following figure shows respondent answers to various types of workplace practices being experienced. MedsChecks-related pressures are the most common. Taken together, MedsChecks pressures (to complete certain number or dollar amount plus direction to complete MedsChecks “cold calls”) are mentioned in over 4,000 responses (purple bars combined).

In second place, we see three workplace pressures that take place in almost equal frequency: other professional services (such as pharmaceutical opinions), pressures to dispense naloxone kits and pressures to complete a set number or dollar amount of minor ailment assessments.

**Figure 9: Types of workplace practices experienced by those respondents who report currently experiencing pressures (choose all that apply)**



With respect to workplace pressures that relate to completing an activity in a limited timeframe, minor ailments stood out. Just over one-third of respondents experiencing minor ailment time pressures told us they were instructed to complete minor ailment assessments in under five minutes. An additional 50% of this group indicated that minor ailment assessments were to be completed in five to ten minutes (not shown).

# 34.2%

instructed to complete minor ailment assessments in **under five minutes**

## WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS TO THE SURVEY?

*It is important to note that there are a number of limitations with this type of survey. This was an online survey where people self-selected to participate. Because of this, data needed to be interpreted with caution as response bias exists and findings may not generalize to all pharmacy professionals or to all pharmacy locations.*

Aggregate data can also hide regional or local variations. Because we did not ask for specific pharmacy locations within a corporate entity or banner, we are not able to comment on individual-level data. Not all Shoppers Drug Mart, Loblaw / Drugstore Pharmacy or Rexall locations will experience the same type or amount of corporate pressure.

Aggregate data can also only be used to identify trends or patterns, not to explain their underlying causes. We can observe that those respondents who previously experienced corporate pressures at their pharmacy but are not currently experiencing them, are also frequently

the same respondents whose data indicate changes in practice locations. Interpreting the causes of these moves is beyond the scope of this survey or the data that was collected at this time.

Additionally, just over 20% of responses reflected pressures experienced six years ago or longer. These experiences may differ from corporate pressures that have taken place more recently. Finally, we were not able to complete a demographic or geographic analysis of responses to learn whether important sub-trends exist because of the large number of missing data.



# FINDINGS, PART 2: Qualitative Analysis

*While the quantitative analysis of survey responses provided a way to consider respondent experiences in a standardized way, greater depth and illustrative details of personal respondent experiences came out in the free-text comments respondents voluntarily provided. While the average time to complete the survey questions alone was approximately 5 minutes, often less, we saw that respondents were spending an average of 13 minutes or more in completing surveys. The additional minutes came from the time and effort respondents put into telling us their stories and sharing their thoughts with us.*

The survey comments were supplemented by additional insights shared by approximately 1,300 participants who attended the virtual town halls. Board and staff members observing the town halls were struck particularly by the depth of emotion in participant commentary and the urgency with which they brought forward their concerns.

The qualitative analysis below provides a unique opportunity to hear directly from practicing pharmacy professionals and document what they see in their daily lives. Their words help clearly illustrate the types of workplace pressures they are experiencing, the effect of workplace pressures on their health, and their hopes for the future of the profession. Together, the survey and town hall comments build a compelling story of the challenges currently being experienced by practicing pharmacy professionals.





## Content Analysis and identification of dominant themes — Methods

A total of 1,619 respondents provided free-text comments in the registrant survey, many of which were quite lengthy and touched on multiple issues. Over 2,600 written comments and over 100 oral comments were submitted by participants over the four virtual town hall sessions. After removing procedural or technical comments, we analyzed thousands of distinct remarks from the surveys and 2,600 complete comments from the town halls for themes.

Content analysis for dominant themes was completed using an iterative process and, because of time constraints, with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) using ChatGPT4.0. Analysis allowed for the identification of multiple themes per comment, as needed. Initial AI analyses were completed for survey and town hall data

separately and findings were compared. Because of the degree of overlap in our findings, we subsequently completed a second analysis where AI matched survey and town hall comments to the themes pre-identified in the independent analyses. These are identified and presented in greater detail below with illustrative examples.

Finally, we used AI to identify any outstanding content unique to either the survey or town halls that did not fit with previously emerging themes. We comment on these findings separately. In general, in both the town halls and the survey, respondents speak of being increasingly frustrated and concerned about the impact of business pressures on their wellbeing and their ability to provide quality, safe care.

## DOMINANT THEMES – WHAT WE HEARD FROM REGISTRANTS

THEME	SURVEY COMMENTS	TOWN HALL COMMENTS
Corporate / Volume / Revenue Pressure	500	600
Role as Healthcare Professionals Undermined	450	550
Quality of Care is Affected	480	500
Pharmacy Professional Well-being is at Risk	400	450
Ethical Concerns and Professional Integrity	350	
Impact on Patient Relationships	300	
Regulatory Oversight and Support	270	
Desire for Systemic Change	256	
Lack of Support and Resources		200
Communication and Transparency		197

While preliminary themes from the town halls were shared in March 2024, a more detailed analysis of the dominant themes emerging from the content analysis are presented below, together with their frequencies in the survey and town halls<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Respondent comments were frequently lengthy and often raised multiple themes. As a result, the category totals across all themes, exceed the original comment count. This reflects the complex interplay of issues facing pharmacists, as many comments encapsulate several concerns simultaneously.

# Corporate/Volume/Revenue Pressure

## What we heard:

- Pressures placed on pharmacy professionals are real and they are pervasive within a number of corporate owned pharmacies.
- The concerns initially raised about MedsChecks were a symptom of a broader concern about pressure to perform various services.
- The pressure to perform services, meet targets, business plans and other metrics can take different forms but all contribute to putting pressure on registrants to perform services that get in the way of their professional autonomy.



## Example Comments:

We're constantly pushed to hit revenue targets, regardless of patient needs.

There's an unwritten rule that your job security depends on meeting sales targets.

My performance review is 90% based on sales and revenue metrics.

The pressure to push services on patients is relentless.

I feel more like a salesperson than a pharmacist due to corporate pressures.

We have targets for everything, from flu shots to wellness checks, regardless of necessity.

Corporate sends weekly emails pressuring us to increase our numbers.

It's all about how many items we can bill for, not patient outcomes.

I didn't study pharmacy to be pressured into sales.

Management prioritizes sales skills over pharmaceutical knowledge.

We are compromising on our professional integrity for sales.

# Role as Healthcare Professionals Undermined

## What we heard:

- Pressures placed on pharmacy professionals are getting in the way of their autonomy as healthcare professionals, thus eroding their own professional identity and public trust in their role.
- Registrants are feeling less like healthcare professionals and more like sales or customer service staff who are being compelled to focus less on quality and patient-centred care and more on volumes and profit.
- Decisions being made by corporate ownership or influenced through complex ownership structures are discordant with the knowledge, skills and judgement of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.
- The newest members of the profession are also being used to participate in high-volume activities in order to meet business or volume targets.



## Example Comments:

I feel like my clinical judgment is second to corporate directives.

We're seen as revenue generators rather than healthcare providers.

Our professional autonomy is eroded by constant sales-focused directives.

It's disheartening to see our professional recommendations overridden by sales goals.

The push to sell diminishes the trust patients have in us.

Corporate goals are prioritizing quick transactions over thorough patient consultations.

The role of a pharmacist is being reduced to that of a mere vendor.

We are routinely asked to compromise our professional standards for the sake of profitability.

Our ability to make professional decisions is being eroded.

Decisions about patient care should be made by healthcare professionals, not accountants.

Our autonomy is compromised by business-driven policies.

# Quality of Care is Affected

## What we heard:

- Registrants are concerned that lack of time to perform services and care properly, and understaffing within the pharmacies, may lead to greater risk of medication incidents and other mistakes that can have an impact on patients.
- Concerns that the overwork and overwhelm can lead to suboptimal care and patient experiences that wind up being the subject of a complaint to the College that otherwise might not have been the case.
- Registrants are feeling overworked and overwhelmed with demands being placed on them by business owners and influencers, creating no capacity to safely take on further scope of practice.



## Example Comments:

We can't provide quality care when we're constantly under the gun to increase numbers.

Errors have increased due to the pressure to process a higher volume of prescriptions.

Patients are not getting the attention they deserve because we're stretched too thin.

High stress levels from meeting targets can lead to mistakes and poor patient interactions.

The lack of time for proper patient consultation is a direct result of corporate demands.

We're forced to cut corners to keep up with the workload imposed by corporate.

Patient care is becoming a tick-box exercise rather than a thoughtful process.

Quality control is difficult to maintain when your primary metric is speed.

Our work environment does not support high-quality healthcare.

Patient education suffers because we don't have time to discuss their medications in depth.



# Pharmacy Professional Well-being is at Risk

## What we heard:

- Registrants are fearful of, or have experienced, repercussions for speaking out or raising their concerns legitimately and appropriately with pharmacy business decision makers, leading to reprimands or loss of employment.
- Those who experience pressures to perform services and meet business, volume or other targets are under such immense pressure that it is impacting their mental health and overall wellbeing, with several reporting experiences with extreme stress, depression, anxiety and exhaustion.
- The fear of burnout, of making mistakes, of losing their jobs and of having to make a choice between quality care and their livelihoods is becoming too much to bear for many.



## Example Comments:

Mental exhaustion from work is becoming a serious issue.

Work pressures are causing anxiety and depression among staff.

The intense workload is negatively impacting my health.

The mental toll of constantly being pushed to do more is overwhelming.

Many pharmacists are considering career changes due to the deteriorating work conditions.

I've seen many pharmacists leave the profession due to stress and dissatisfaction.

Burnout is common, and many pharmacists feel unsupported and undervalued.

Stress levels are through the roof with no relief in sight.

I feel like I'm at breaking point with the stress from trying to meet these unrealistic targets.

Workload is unmanageable and it's taking a toll on my health.

The relentless pressure is causing serious burnout among my colleagues and me.

I've never felt more stressed and less supported in my career.

# Ethical Concerns and Professional Integrity

## What we heard:

- Professionals are feeling undervalued and undermined when faced with upholding professional standards when business practices, expectations and policies seemingly encourage unethical practices.
- Concerns about ethical responsibilities and obligations that pharmacy professionals must adhere to are not supported or promoted by those driving business decisions.
- Registrants are being pressured to perform services that effectively eliminate their professional autonomy to make decisions in the best interests of their patients.



## Example Comments:

I am pressured to provide services that aren't always necessary, which conflicts with my professional integrity.

I worry about the ethical implications of pushing unnecessary products on vulnerable patients.

I'm concerned about the long-term damage to our profession's reputation due to these practices.

I never thought I'd have to choose between keeping my job and staying true to my ethical principles.

I feel like we're slowly being turned into salespeople rather than healthcare providers.

The erosion of ethical standards in our profession due to corporate pressures is alarming.

Facing ethical dilemmas has become a daily occurrence due to conflicting interests.

It's hard to uphold professional standards when corporate policies encourage bending the rules.

# Impact on Patient Relationships

## What we heard:

- Patient trust is a cornerstone of pharmacy care; pharmacy professionals are feeling that the patient-provider relationship is being eroded by decisions that don't keep patients' best interests at heart.
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are important members of a patient's healthcare team; pressures that legitimize volume over quality create unnecessary tension with patients and with other healthcare providers.



## Example Comments:

The trust between us and our patients erodes when they sense we're just pushing services.

Our relationships with patients suffer because we're seen as sales agents first.

Patients are starting to notice that our interactions are more transactional.

It's becoming harder to maintain meaningful patient relationships with all these quotas.

I worry about losing patient trust as corporate strategies prioritize profits over care.

We're losing the personal touch that once defined the pharmacist-patient relationship.

Patients feel they're being treated like walking wallets rather than individuals with healthcare needs.

Our professional advice is overshadowed by the push to sell, and patients are noticing.

Increasingly, our interactions with patients are dictated by sales goals, not healthcare needs.

# Regulatory Oversight and Support

## What we heard:

- Respondents to the survey and town hall expressed frustration over the perceived lack of support and oversight from regulatory bodies, professional associations and government.
- Pharmacy professionals report feeling pulled in different directions – to meet professional expectations and standards and meet business targets expected of them to remain employed.
- More regulatory levers are needed to address the concerns of corporate pressures that conflict with pharmacy professional autonomy.



## Example Comments:

Regulators need to step in and address the unsustainable work conditions imposed by corporations.

We need stronger advocacy from our professional organizations against corporate pressures.

Regulators should be more proactive in ensuring our workplaces adhere to ethical practices.

I wish our regulatory body would do more to shield us from profit-driven exploitation.

Regulatory bodies need to enforce rules that protect pharmacists from being overworked and under-supported.

There's a disconnect between the ideals promoted by our regulators and the reality in corporate pharmacies.

Regulations that would genuinely protect pharmacists from exploitation are needed but lacking.

I'm disappointed by the lack of robust regulatory response to clear ethical breaches in pharmacy practices.

Regulatory oversight is inadequate when it comes to checking the power of big pharmacy chains.

More stringent regulations and checks are needed to prevent corporate from undermining pharmacy practice.



# Desire for Systemic Change

## What we heard:

- There is a strong desire for changes within the healthcare system that promote pharmacy professional wellbeing, protect their autonomy as healthcare professionals and prioritize patient-centred care decisions and delivery.



## Example Comments:

We need a revolution in pharmacy practice to put patient care back at the center.

A shift towards more ethical practices is essential for the future of pharmacy.

There should be more focus on pharmacists' well-being in the system's design.

Systemic changes are necessary to shift focus from profit to patient health.

Systemic changes would help restore the trust patients have in pharmacy.

Major changes are needed to realign pharmacy practices with healthcare values.

We must advocate for systemic reforms that support pharmacists as healthcare providers.

We need policies that support ethical practice over corporate profits.

We need a system where pharmacists can thrive professionally without compromising on care.

# Lack of Support and Resources or Adequate Communication/Transparency

## What we heard:

- Staffing and human resources pressures were commonly referenced as one of the major stressors for pharmacy professional burnout and the delivery of suboptimal care.
- Employment standards within the province should be changed to ensure pharmacy professionals receive adequate breaks during their shifts.
- The concerns about insufficient resources in pharmacies leads to concerns about ongoing capacity to take on providing additional services to their patients.
- A lack of communication, proper systems, and concerns about transparency of decision making involving pharmacy were common sources of frustration.



## Example Comments:

There's never enough people on shift to handle the workload.

Decisions are made at the top with no input from us and minimal communication until changes are already implemented.

We need more resources to do our jobs effectively.

We often find out about changes too late to adapt properly.

We're always playing catch-up because there aren't enough hands.

Lack of proper equipment makes our work harder than it needs to be.

Insufficient training on new systems is frustrating.

We need more support to deal with daily challenges.

The lack of staff is making it unsafe at times.

We're stretched too thin to provide quality care.

Decisions affecting us are made without any discussion with us.

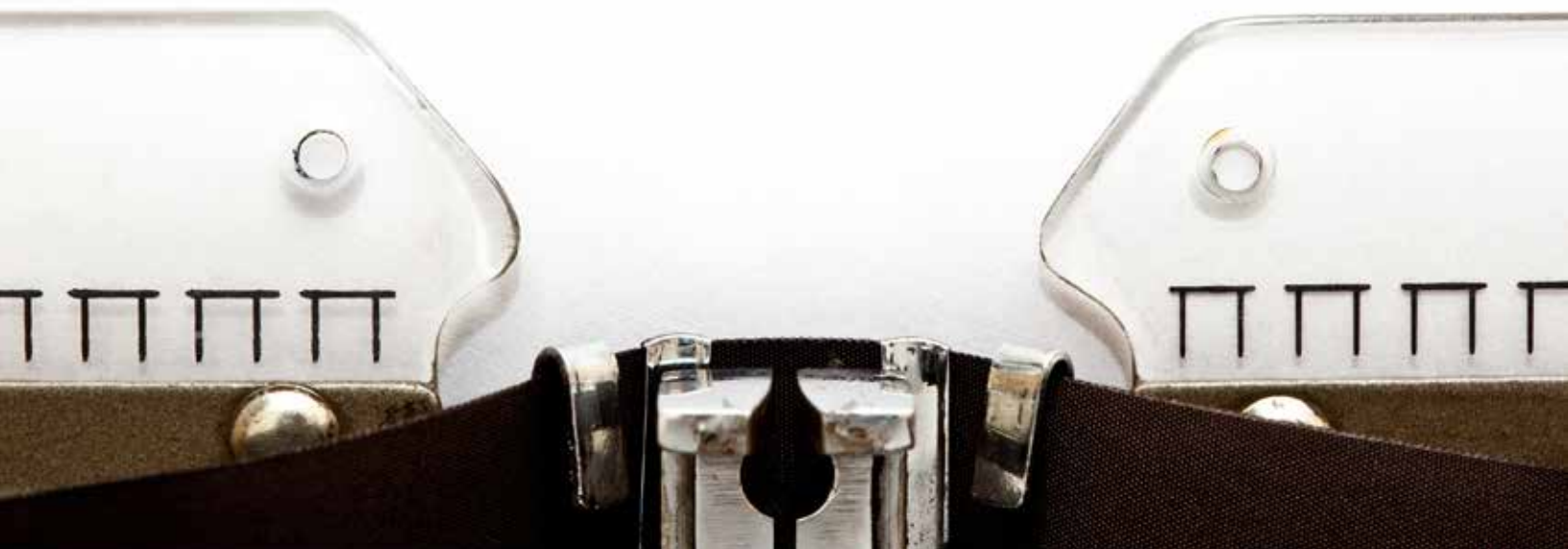
## Conclusion

The report documents and shares what we heard directly from registrants across the province through an online survey and a series of virtual town halls. The concerns they have raised are compelling as the analysis reinforces what OCP reported initially to the Board in March 2024: **pharmacy professionals are expressing that they are under stress and duress and that corporate influence on pharmacy professional autonomy is compromising the delivery of ethical, quality patient care and their wellbeing.**

OCP will continue to refer to the comments shared by survey and town hall respondents, and to the ongoing feedback and insights being shared by registrants since the Board formally established zero tolerance for business practices that compromise the ability of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to deliver safe and effective care to their patients.

Progress on our activities to respond to these pressures will be reported routinely through OCP's regular communications channels and at each public Board meeting.

# IT IS TIME TO ACT.



# APPENDIX 1:

## Methodological note on figure 4 – Percent of respondents indicating workplace pressures out of the number of respondents who indicated they currently work at that pharmacy

Previously released data were only able to include absolute numbers of respondents by pharmacy of current practice and absolute numbers of respondents who are experiencing workplace pressures. We felt it important to create rates (percentages) of workplace pressures by pharmacy type to better understand whether respondent experiences differed according to where they worked.

To create a rate, we needed to remove 915 respondents with multiple workplaces (20% of the total). Without doing so, we might be wrongly attributing workplace pressure experiences to the wrong pharmacy (for

example, a respondent who works both at a Rexall pharmacy and a Costco pharmacy or at a Rexall pharmacy and an independent pharmacy might tell us they are experiencing workplace pressures, but we wouldn't know at which pharmacy those workplace pressures are taking place. Removing multiple workplaces allows us to correlate experience of workplace pressures with a single workplace).

The 915 respondents whose answers were removed for this one analysis were slightly different from the full sample of respondents but not in a way that changes the overall interpretation of the data.

