

CORPORATE PRESSURES PROGRESS UPDATE



Ontario College
of Pharmacists
Putting patients first since 1871

June 2024

In March 2024, the OCP Board established zero tolerance for any business practice that impedes the ability of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to deliver safe, quality care. Since then, OCP has been actively pursuing several strategies to respond to corporate pressures in pharmacy. This bulletin will be part of a series of updates provided as this work progresses.



REGULATORY PROGRAMS

- ✓ Hiring legal experts to advise us on investigating individuals who are involved in corporate direction-setting that might interfere with a pharmacy professional's ability to meet their professional obligations.
- ✓ Meeting with our Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee, our Accreditation and Drug Preparation Premises Committees and our Quality Assurance Committee to review the extent of their authority and to help clarify their role in enforcing our zero-tolerance position.
- ✓ Reviewing how we accredit pharmacies and our processes for reviewing applications for accreditation and renewal. This may involve looking at the conduct and character of all directors and the contents of contracts and leasing arrangements that may restrict the autonomy of pharmacy professionals.
- ✓ Reviewing how we assess pharmacies and pharmacy professionals to gather information that will help us identify pharmacy services that are subject to corporate pressures and to ensure professional expectations are being met.

- ✓ Sharing analyzed results of our registrant survey/town halls, to be published for the July Board meeting.
- ✓ Setting up a hotline for professionals and members of the public to report problems related to corporate pressures, set for mid June 2024.
- ✓ Monitoring social media to identify trends and help inform and educate registrants and the public and encourage those with evidence of corporate pressure to share it with the College.
- ✓ Collaborating with other pharmacy regulators across the country, as appropriate, to pool our ideas, our research and our data to see what we might accomplish together.
- ✓ Considering how we might publicly report on regulatory program activities, including complaints and operational assessment outcomes by pharmacy type and ownership.
- ✓ Gathering information to help identify the best legislative options for change. This will include evaluating what other jurisdictions have done to identify approaches most likely to have an impact.
- ✓ Exploring ways to collect data that support evidence-based policy decisions. This may include different data collection and coding within the College, compulsory provider experience survey data and partnerships with other organizations.
- ✓ Meeting with the top four corporations identified as exerting pressure that impedes pharmacy professionals' ability to provide quality care: Shoppers Drug Mart, Loblaw, Rexall and Walmart. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss survey/town hall results, provide the corporations with an update on our activities and to hear from them what changes they intend to make.



DATA & INFORMATION SHARING



LEGISLATION/REGULATION

- ✓ Examining laws that govern franchises, insurance companies, retail sales and employment standards. We will also be examining the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act (DPRA), including the pharmacist ownership exemption for corporations operating before 1954, and the Pharmacy Act, including the professional misconduct regulations.
- ✓ Exploring the role of the regulator with respect to pharmacy funding, which we know has a critical influence on the delivery of patient care.

- ✓ Conducting risk-based policy work to prepare a position statement regarding PPNs.
- ✓ Talking to partners in the health system about their ideas for potential solutions as well as researching approaches used in other jurisdictions to identify the most effective options.
- ✓ Considering policy options to reinforce autonomous decision-making expectations for pharmacists. These could include restrictions on the use of the word 'clinic' with pharmacy care delivery, development of standards to preserve autonomy through employment or operations contracts, publishing 'performance' data at the individual pharmacy or corporate level, and consideration of staffing to service ratio requirements.
- ✓ Completing a feasibility report based on ideas collected prior to, during and following the March 2024 Board meeting.



POLICY

The College has zero tolerance for any business practices that impede pharmacy professionals' ability to provide effective and safe care to their patients.