Guidance for Engaging in Specified Expanded Scope Activities

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Background

Pharmacy professionals have varying levels of experience, training, knowledge and skill with respect to different clinical activities. The type and extent of education and training among pharmacy professionals also varies depending on when they were trained (i.e., pharmacy education has evolved over time) and where they were trained (i.e., domestic vs. international pharmacy programs differ). When new activities are introduced to the Ontario pharmacy professional's scope of practice, it is important for the College to 'level-set' any specific knowledge or skill expectations across the profession, especially when certain expanded scope activities may potentially be new or more complex. Doing so is aligned with the College's public protection mandate by supporting consistency in the level and quality of care being provided.

From 2026-2027, the scope of practice expanded for pharmacy professionals. As part of the expansion, some activities were identified through a risk analysis to be potentially more clinically complex, including:

- Assessment and management by pharmacists of:
    - Acute pharyngitis
    - Otitis externa
    - Herpes zoster
- Administration of injectable buprenorphine extended release by pharmacists

Given the greater clinical complexity surrounding these activities, it is important that pharmacists ensure they have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities with respect to these activities prior to engaging in them.

Expectations for Engaging in Specified Expanded Scope of Practice Activities

The following expectations describe at a minimum the knowledge and skills pharmacists should have before they engage in these activities. Pharmacists are encouraged to reflect on the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competence they possess, acquired through education and training (CCAP programs, CCCEP accredited courses), or experiential learning (i.e., work or other hands-on experience). Continuing education opportunities

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should be explored and pursued to address any identified gaps. Please refer to the **Continuing Education Links for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians** webpage for links to continuing education provider websites to access current continuing education resources and courses.

1. Assessment and Prescribing for Acute Pharyngitis

Any registrant who assesses, prescribes for, and/or manages acute pharyngitis, must have up-to-date knowledge of the condition, and have acquired learning that includes:

- The pathophysiology, clinical presentation and risk factors
- The differential diagnoses
- The red flags for referral
- How to perform physical assessments for acute pharyngitis
- Decision-making with respect to assessment and related testing, such as applying the modified CENTOR scoring system for identification of suspected Group A streptococcal infection
- Practical skills including swabbing techniques (for specimen collection)
- Infection prevention and control principles (that considers the community pharmacy environment)
- Prescribing decisions based on current clinical guidelines (viral vs. bacterial etiologies; selection of antimicrobials; application of antimicrobial stewardship principles)
- Non-pharmacological and pharmacological treatment options
- Monitoring and follow-up parameters
- How to perform the point of care testing and laboratory testing to support assessment of acute pharyngitis, including appropriate follow-up on test results

2. Assessment and Prescribing for Otitis Externa

Any registrant who assesses, prescribes for, and manages otitis externa, must have up-to-date knowledge of the condition, and acquired learning that includes:

- The pathophysiology, clinical presentation and risk factors
- The differential diagnoses, including for example, differentiation between otitis externa and otitis media, differentiation from localized inflammation caused by

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dermatological conditions, and common ear pathologies of the middle and external ear

- The red flags for referral, and the importance of timely referral to primary care providers or advising patients to follow up with other healthcare providers, such as an audiologist
- Infection prevention and control principles (that consider the community pharmacy environment, and workflow demands)
- Non-pharmacological and pharmacological treatment options
- Prescribing decisions (selection of antimicrobials; application of antimicrobial stewardship principles) based on current clinical guidelines
- Monitoring and the follow-up parameters, including interdisciplinary care plans as appropriate
- How to perform physical assessments for otitis externa, including having attended virtual and/or in-person training on otoscope use *(Note: hands-on experience is encouraged to acquire proficiency in otoscopy, but how and to what extent to acquire that experience remains at the discretion of registrants.)*

3. Assessment and Prescribing for Herpes Zoster

Any registrant who assesses, prescribes for, and manages herpes zoster, must have up-to-date knowledge of the condition, and acquired learning that includes:

- The pathophysiology, clinical presentation and risk factors
- Variation in clinical presentation of shingles across different ethnic/racial backgrounds
- The differential diagnoses
- The red flags for referral
- Infection prevention and control principles (that considers the community pharmacy environment)
- Non-pharmacological and pharmacological treatment options, including consideration of special populations (e.g., patients with renal disease, patients living with cancer)
- Monitoring and follow-up parameters, especially related to high-risk shingles

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- Counselling on vaccination to prevent recurrence

4. Administration of Injectable Buprenorphine

Any registrant who administers injectable buprenorphine must have acquired learning, through a manufacturer's certification course or other opioid agonist therapy training that includes:

- How to safely administer injectable buprenorphine subcutaneously, including any warnings, precautions or specific protocols
- Monitoring and follow-up parameters, especially understanding protocols for managing adverse events

Revision History

Version #	Date	Action
1.00	TBD	Developed to support expanded scope of practice activities in 2027. **Note:** This guidance document is subject to change, as scope of practice evolves over time.

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