

TECHtalk

AUGUST 2018

TECH FINDS FULFILLMENT AT REGULATORY COLLEGE

BY THE NUMBERS

PHARMACY EXAMINING BOARD OF CANADA (PEBC): 2017

- Number of names added to the pharmacy technician register by examination: **970**
- Total names as of 2017: **9,484** (since 2009)
- Number of candidates who took the Qualifying Exam—Part I (MCQ): **1,500** (2016: 1,293)
- Number of candidates who took the Qualifying Exam—Part II (OSPE): **1,393** (2016: 1,294)
- Number of candidates who wrote the Evaluating Exam: **399** (2016: 333)
- Date of the last Evaluating Exam: **October 2018**

Source: PEBC, 2018 Annual Board Meeting Summary, March 2018

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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN KATHLEEN

Nguyen had always been interested in health-care, and specifically pharmacy. But when she graduated from a CCAPP-accredited college in 2012, she could hardly have imagined her career path would lead to the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia, where she now works as the coordinator for registration and licensure.

Although Nguyen has been working in the field only six years—and registered since 2015—she has already compiled an impressive resume. Upon completing her practicum at Langley Memorial Hospital, she was immediately hired there. “One week I was a student and the next week, I was working full-time,” she says. Nguyen stayed for four years, gaining much valuable experience. “I couldn’t have been luckier to work with such an amazing team,” she says. “The model there is so great in terms of encouraging technicians to take ownership over their roles, and having other technicians mentor [those] coming in. It was a really collaborative environment between the pharmacists, the techs and other support workers at the hospital.”

During her stint at Langley, Nguyen became proficient in inventory management, billing systems and other administrative duties that “techs typically don’t always get unless you gravitate towards that kind of role,” she says.

Her keen interest in information technology and the pharmacy system prompted her to apply in 2016 for a job with the pharmacy informatics team at Providence Health Care, working out of St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver.

Nguyen landed her current position after responding to an advertisement. She began at the College in April 2017, while also remaining temporarily at Providence Health Care to help with a major project that involved updating the pharmacy system.

Her job at the College encompasses two arms: registration and licensure. On the registration side, she oversees the Structured Practical Training program for pharmacy techs,



as well as coordination of the jurisprudence exam in the province.

Her licensure duties consist of conducting pre-opening inspections for pharmacies—including approving diagrams to ensure they meet the minimum requirements—and issuing the licence. “It’s a very interesting role, especially since a lot of the pharmacies that open are community-based,” says Nguyen. “Typically, we get about 40 community pharmacies opening in a year.” While the community pharmacies are usually licensed through an inspection of digital files, the hospital pharmacy inspections are conducted on-site. “It’s a really interesting experience to go to the hospitals and see the technology that they have,” says Nguyen.

In fact, keeping up with changes in the ever-evolving field of pharmacy is one of the greatest challenges of her position. She cites recent amendments to the Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act (PODSA) that directly affect her responsibilities in licensure. “Just preparing for that, we had a heavy IT piece that we had to build out, and we worked collaboratively with our IT department to do that,” she notes. “It was a huge learning experience, but I was able to apply my

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An educational service for Canadian pharmacy technicians, brought to you by Teva www.tevacanada.com



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Alberta techs, assistants can provide naloxone kits

THE ALBERTA COLLEGE OF PHARMACY (ACP) has updated its guidance to allow pharmacy techs and assistants to provide Take Home Naloxone (THN) kits, as long as they are appropriately trained to educate the individual receiving the kit—and they perform consistently with the program guidelines, the ACP Standards of Practice and the Code of Ethics. Pharmacy assistants require direct supervision by pharmacists.

Naloxone temporarily prevents or reverses the effects of opioids, including respiratory depression, sedation and hypotension. In the

absence of opioids, naloxone does not exhibit any pharmacological activity, so it cannot be abused and does not increase the likelihood of overdose or of increased drug consumption.

The drug is now unscheduled in Alberta, but THN kits must be kept in the dispensary. Naloxone is administered by intramuscular injection, and while this is a restricted activity, the training required for self-administration is not, allowing pharmacy technicians and assistants to now provide the kits.

The updated guidance is available at <http://pharmacists.ab.ca/naloxone>.

PTSA aims to “inspire” at 2018 Conference

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR THE 28th Annual Conference of the Pharmacy Technician Society of Alberta (PTSA), to be held September 14-15 at the Carriage House Inn in Calgary.

Under the theme “Inspire,” the conference will offer sessions on a wide variety of topics, including applications of methadone maintenance treatment in an acute care setting, a dialysis unit clinical technician pilot program, and ways in which the pharmacy technician role has adapted and expanded to bring about change in patient care services.

There will be an international flavour as well, with a presentation from the first pharmacy technician legally authorized to administer injections to patients in the U.S. The resident

of Idaho will discuss the change in that state's legislation that made this development possible, as well as the requirements that technicians must meet. Another U.S.-based pharmacy technician will share her experience in launching a major policy initiative to implement new standardized opioid prescription guidelines in Air Force pharmacies in Europe.

At an “Imagineering Day” workshop that will take place the day before the sessions, delegates will share ideas with their colleagues to help shape the future of the pharmacy technician profession. The day will be capped off with an evening reception, vendor displays, silent auction and awards ceremony.

For more information, visit <https://ptsa.ca/annual-conference-2018/>.

Ontario techs obliged to report sexual abuse of a patient

AS REGULATED HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, it is mandatory for pharmacy techs to file a report in writing with the Registrar if they have reasonable grounds to believe that another regulated healthcare professional has sexually abused a patient, notes the Ontario College of Pharmacy (OCP).

The report must be made within 30 days and may include the patient's name only if written consent has been given by the patient or the patient's representative if the patient is incapable. It must include the name of the member filing the report, the name of the member who is the subject of the report and an explanation of the alleged sexual abuse.

Pharmacy professionals' behaviour must align with the Code of Ethics. Among other obligations, they must maintain appropriate boundaries with their patients, never become sexually involved with a patient, and not harass or otherwise intimidate patients.

Guidelines comply with the requirement of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) that regulatory authorities take measures to prevent and deal with the sexual abuse of patients.

For more details, visit www.ocpinfo.com/regulations-standards/policies-guidelines/boundaries/.

Health Canada releases new guidelines for collecting, returning outdated narcotics

HEALTH CANADA'S RELEASE OF TWO guidance documents to support the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) recognizes that pharmacy technicians have a role to play in both the collection and destruction of outdated or unusable narcotics and controlled substances.

According to the Alberta College of Pharmacists, the guidelines streamline, update and clarify procedures, expectations and practices related to the handling and destruction of unserviceable stock and post-consumer medications by various parties regulated under the CDSA.

The guidelines state that pharmacists working in a retail or community pharmacy are responsible for securing the post-consumer returns that a pharmacy accepts until they are destroyed locally or are sent off-site for destruction purposes. However, it is pharmacy technicians, pharmacists or pharmacy interns who must receive post-consumer returns and deposit them in a tamper-evident, single-use, one-way entry container with a unique identifier number.

Pharmacy technicians may want to suggest to consumers who are returning unused or expired medications that they remove personal information from pill bottles and packages, says the guidance document. This is the responsibility of consumers, it notes.

Health Canada had previously recommended that pharmacists record the name of drug products, strength and quantity for post-consumer returns, but effective April 1, 2018, it no longer requires this informa-

tion. Therefore, there is no need to separate post-consumer returned controlled substances from other post-consumer returned prescription or non-prescription medications.

When it comes to destroying post-consumer returns, "the pharmacist has to do the destroying, but the tech can witness the destruction," says Bill Brown, a pharmacist who owns methadone clinics in Oakville, Ont. The destruction must be witnessed in duplicate by the pharmacist and pharmacy technician. Both persons must sign and print their names on the generated record and indicate that they witnessed the destruction and that the substance was altered or denatured to such an extent that its consumption was rendered impossible or improbable. This infor-

mation must be recorded in a register similar to that required to be kept for orders involving narcotics, controlled drugs and targeted substances, and must be retained for a period of two years. "The pharmacist has to sign off on any record keeping," notes Brown.

Pharmacy technicians also support pharmacists through the identification and removal of unusable inventory and assisting in its return.

According to the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authority (NAPRA) Model Standards of Practice for Pharmacy Technicians, "Pharmacy technicians, when contributing to management within a pharmacy...maintain inventory to maximize safe and

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LOSS OR THEFT OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

The Office of Controlled Substances has also released a new guidance document, titled "Reporting of Loss or Theft of Controlled Substances and Precursors."

Already in effect, the document provides instructions on the scope of what should be reported to Health Canada when a loss or theft is detected, and includes a fillable PDF form to complete.

If a loss, theft or forgery occurs, it must be reported to the local police immediately and to the Office of Controlled Substances no later than 10 days after its discovery.

The guidance document can be viewed at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/loss-theft-controlled-substances-precursors.html>.

To view the form, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-concerns/controlled-substances-precursor-chemicals/controlled-substances/compliance-monitoring/loss-theft-forgery/loss-theft-report-form.html>.



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ISMP Canada introduces online program for compliance packaging

THE INSTITUTE FOR SAFE MEDICATION

Practices (ISMP) Canada has developed an e-learning program to help pharmacy technicians, pharmacy assistants and pharmacists safely prepare compliance packages. The five-module course introduces medication safety principles and concepts specifically applicable to compliance packaging and examines the potential for medication errors associated with compliance packaging. It also provides system-based strategies for prevention.

Each module is 10 to 20 minutes in length; they can be completed all at once or one at a time. The cost is \$225 plus applicable taxes. The Canadian Council on Continuing Education in Pharmacy (CCCEP) has accredited the program for three CEUs for both pharmacy technicians and pharmacists.

For more information, visit <https://secure.ismp-canada.org/elearning/course/index.php?categoryid=7>

B.C. College provides tools to help techs prepare for practice reviews

IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM

community pharmacy professionals about the Practice Review Program (PRP), the College of Pharmacists of BC has introduced four new PRP support tools. The tools and accompanying Tool card provide comprehensive outlines of the requirements that comprise each of the four focus areas for pharmacy professionals in community practice.

The focus areas for pharmacy technicians, in either community or hospital set-

tings, are: Patient Identification Verification, Product Distribution, Collaboration and Documentation.

The College encourages those not scheduled for a review to use the resources as well, to self-evaluate and improve their practice.

For more information, visit www.bcpharmacists.org/practice-review-program.

College compliance officers began conducting PRPs for pharmacy technicians in community practice in December 2017.

NAPRA releases guidance document for compounding standards

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PHARMACY REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

(NAPRA) has now released its previously promised guidance document to accompany the Model Standards for Pharmacy Compounding of Non-sterile Preparations. The guidance document was developed to provide more detail on how the Standards can be achieved. It also assists with their implementation.

The 60-page document can be viewed at www.napra.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Mdl_Stnds_Pharmacy_Compounding_Nonsterile_Preparations_GUIDANCE_March2018_FINAL.pdf

Implementation of the Standards is under the authority of the respective provincial, territorial or Canadian Forces pharmacy regulatory bodies, each of which establishes its own process and timeline.

Program helps pharmacy professionals ease caregiver burnout

A RECENT SURVEY CONDUCTED BY

Edelman market research firm on behalf of Teva Canada revealed that the majority of caregivers in Canada say caring for others is taking a huge toll on their emotional, physical and social well-being. One-third of respondents also noted that they don't feel supported by their pharmacists.

The research results prompted Teva to col-

laborate with the Canadian Caregiver Network (CCN) and its digital platform for caregivers, Huddol, to launch a pilot program in Quebec to help pharmacists better support caregivers. The Teva training and care kits are available to all practising pharmacists in that province. The results of the pilot will help guide a national rollout of the Caregiver Friendly Pharmacist program in 2019.

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pharmacy information systems background."

What she finds most rewarding about her job is engaging with people from many different facets of the pharmacy profession, as well as speaking at conferences. For example, she provided an update on College activities to delegates of the 2017 conference of the Pharmacy Technician Society of British Columbia, and addressed this year's Canadian Association of Pharmacy Technicians' Professional Development Conference on the topic of the opioid overdose crisis. She hopes to marry her interest in technology with her pharmacy skill set for future presentations.

Given Nguyen's natural curiosity and thirst for knowledge, it's not surprising that her advice for new pharmacy technicians is to become the "go to" person on their team. "I wholeheartedly believe in becoming a strong resource of knowledge for anybody on your team," she says. "If you can't answer a question, you say: 'I don't know, but I can find out.'"

>> TECH REFRESHER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

effective drug distribution, including: (...)

- e. Receiving and storing all drugs and medical devices, including controlled substances (9.2.2):
 - i. in compliance with legislation
 - ii. to maintain drug stability and protect integrity;
- f. identifying/locating, reporting and removing expired, defective, unsafe or recalled drugs and medical devices, and;
- g. disposing of, destroying or returning expired, unusable or recalled drugs according to legislation."

The bottom line: as key members of the pharmacy team, pharmacy technicians must do everything within their scope of practice to protect the drugs in their possession.

To view the guidance document, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-concerns/controlled-substances-precursor-chemicals/controlled-substances/compliance-monitoring/compliance-monitoring-controlled-substances/post-consumer-returns.html>.