

TECHtalk

MARCH 2020

TECH COMBINES TWIN PASSIONS IN PRACTICE

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN ASFIYA RAHMAN is passionate about healthcare and education. As a program coordinator of the pharmacy technician program at Algonquin Careers Academy (ACA) in Ottawa, she has found the best of both worlds.

CPhM releases community pharmacy safety culture toolkit

THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS OF Manitoba's new Community Pharmacy Safety Culture (CPSC) Toolkit provides resources to support pharmacy professionals during the province-wide rollout of Safety IQ, a standardized system of continuous quality improvement designed to prevent medication incidents from happening in community pharmacies.

The toolkit focuses on areas of safety culture, including measurement and monitoring of safety culture, leadership, teamwork and communication, psychological safety, transparency, accountability, disclosing medication incidents to patients, and supporting pharmacy professionals following a medication incident.

The rollout follows a successful year-long pilot program.

But it was a roundabout route many years in the making that got her here. Rahman earned her bachelor's degrees in General Sciences and in Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery in India, working in her hometown of Hyderabad as a family physician until she married and moved to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Because she was not able to practise medicine there, she turned to her other passion, teaching. Thirteen years later she moved to Canada. To break into the workforce in a new country, she took a job in the toy department of Walmart, where she says she "learned a lot" from chatting with shoppers.

A year later, she stumbled upon an ad for Algonquin Careers Academy. Seeing an opportunity to re-enter the healthcare profession, she enrolled in what was then a pharmacy technician certification program. Upon graduation, she landed a job at Gabriel Drugs, the pharmacy where she had done her placement, and became registered in 2012.

In 2011, ACA approached her to take on a part-time teaching position in the pharmacy assistant program. ACA has since earned accreditation from the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP), and in 2016, Rahman assumed her current position. In that capacity, she is responsible for setting and teaching the curriculum to uphold the CCAPP standards, as well as those of the Canadian Pharmacy Technicians Educators Association (CPTEA) and the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA). "Keeping a balance of all these standards required for a regulated, accredited college is a summarized version of what I do," she explains.

Rahman continues to work at Gabriel Drugs one day a week to keep active in the field. "I don't want to lose that connection because you can learn only so much theoretically, but practically it makes a lot of difference when you are in that situation." She says she likes dealing with customers and with other healthcare professionals and bringing those experiences back to her students.



The beginning of every school year is always a balancing act between making students aware of what will be expected of them as pharmacy professionals, while at the same time not discouraging them. "There are times when there are students who need a little nudge because they have the capabilities, but they don't know how to enforce them," she says. "So as an educator, it's very rewarding when I receive phone calls and emails from them saying they have passed the board exams, which are very challenging for them, and they have accomplished their career goals."

As for her own goals, Rahman, who was nominated in 2019 for the Career Colleges Ontario Excellence in Teaching award, has been appointed to the board of the Canadian Council on Continuing Education in Pharmacy (CCCEP), where she hopes to encourage the pharmacy technician community to make more use of the resources available. She says her main focus will be on emphasizing and improving patient care.

"The pharmacy profession is ever-evolving, and I would like to keep myself updated and connected with the practice standards," she says, noting that she loves being a part of providing better health outcomes to patients. "I hope to accomplish this by teaching the importance of this profession to my students and continuing my practical experience at the pharmacy where I work."

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Reminder to update patient profiles in hospital settings

THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS OF British Columbia reports that, during hospital Pharmacy Practice Reviews under the Practice Review Program (PRP), compliance officers have observed registrants processing medication orders prior to ensuring that the patient profile is up to date.

In order to ensure that the pharmacy has the most up-to-date allergy information when entering and verifying prescribers' orders, registrants must update allergies, adverse drug reactions and intolerances in the patient's record at every admission—including instances when a patient is readmitted to a hospital and already has an allergy record on file. Ongoing communication between the nursing staff and the pharmacy

is critical in ensuring the continued accuracy of the patient record, and a well-established process for reporting and checking for allergies, adverse drug reactions and intolerances should be in place.

If a patient is unaware of any allergies, the registrant should document "no known drug allergies" so there is a record that medication allergy information has been addressed.

Compliance officers cited examples in which follow-up by the pharmacy technician revealed reactions that had not been documented. The officers also shared some of their early findings where non-compliance was observed for residential care services, a relatively new component of the PRP.

CSHP considers full membership for techs

THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF HOSPITAL Pharmacists (CSHP) has conducted a membership survey to determine whether pharmacy technicians should become full members. The question received a majority of positive responses from both members and pharmacy technicians. Those who responded positively talked about the change being necessary to reflect current trends in pharmacy, to become more inclusive, and to generate increases in membership and revenue for CSHP.

The majority of pharmacists thought technicians should be integrated into the Society as members of the provincial branch, while technicians favoured new provincial CSHP branches for pharmacy technicians.

Currently, pharmacy technicians are not full members of CSHP, but join under the Supporter

category along with other non-pharmacists.

CSHP is also promoting resources for pharmacy technicians on its website, including Pharmacy Specialty Networks (PSNs), to reach out to pharmacy technicians and pharmacists in a number of areas, such as medication safety, medication distribution, small hospital, and more.

This year, CSHP announced new eligibility status for pharmacy technicians to be recognized in a national award, and recently, its Hospital Pharmacy in Canada Survey Board welcomed pharmacy technician Bal Dhillon as a member.

A new pharmacy technician task force will recommend an inclusion strategy at the April 2020 board meeting with the goal of implementing recommendations for the 2021 membership year.

PTCB launches programs for techs in advanced roles; funds naloxone training

AS PHARMACY TECHNICIANS ASSUME more expanded roles, the U.S.-based Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) has launched advanced Assessment-Based Certificate Programs in two specialty areas: Technician Product Verification (TPV) and Medication History. The programs recognize advanced knowledge in specific pharmacy roles and are part of PTCB's expansion of credential offerings. The Board plans to release three more certificate programs and an Advanced Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT-Adv) designation by year end.

PTCB also awarded grants to pharmacy associations in three states to fund technician training in the use and benefits of the opioid antagonist naloxone to counter overdose, and in processes to monitor prescriptions, track

high-alert medications and related duties. Only one state—Idaho— currently permits technicians to deliver the treatment, so one recipient state's project includes development of a legislative roadmap and model language for state-level rulemaking to allow technicians to dispense naloxone.

As of January 1, PTCB implemented new eligibility requirements and an updated Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam (PTCE) for its Certified Pharmacy Technician Program. The 2020 modifications require aspiring CPhTs to either complete a PTCB-recognized Education/Training Program or have equivalent work experience before they take the PTCE. The changes reflect input from more than 40,000 technicians across practice settings and guidance from the pharmacy community.

Mental health assistance program for Ontario techs

LIFEMARK HEALTH GROUP NOW provides case management and monitoring services for registrants of the Ontario College of Pharmacists.

Since 2004, the College has provided an assistance program offering intervention, assessment, and monitoring to registrants experiencing work/life stress, concerns about their mental health or substance-use problems. However, under the new Ontario Pharmacy Health Program (OPHP) administered by Lifemark, the primary objective is to ensure that registrants receive appropriate treatment and monitoring services and remain in stable recovery, thereby allowing them to practise safely when they return to the workplace.

The program is available to all registrants of the College. They can access it directly and anonymously, or the College can facilitate access on behalf of the registrant.

Techs a fast-growing segment at NLPB

PHARMACY TECHNICIANS ARE THE fastest-growing segment of registrants at the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board (NLPB).

They were first able to register in 2015. By December 2017, there were 100 registered pharmacy technicians; there are now

more than 200 registered in the province.

Currently, pharmacy technicians in NL are more likely to work in hospital settings than in community pharmacy or other work environments. Sixty-five per cent work in hospitals, similar to 60 per cent in Ontario and 64 per cent in Saskatchewan, reports NLPB.

B.C. techs must complete OAT-CAMPP training

THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS OF British Columbia requires that pharmacy technicians employed in a community pharmacy that provides pharmacy services related to buprenorphine/naloxone maintenance treatment, methadone maintenance treatment or slow-release oral morphine maintenance treatment successfully complete the Opioid Agonist Treatment Compliance and Management Program for Pharmacy (OAT-CAMPP) training program by March 31, 2021. While pharmacists must attend an in-person workshop, pharmacy technicians need to complete only the online modules.

The accredited course is the first of its kind in Canada focusing solely on the needs of community pharmacists and technicians in delivering care to patients with opioid use disorder.

Prior to the development of the OAT-CAMPP, registrants were required to complete the College's Methadone Maintenance Treatment training program. However, this program is being phased out by March 31, 2021.

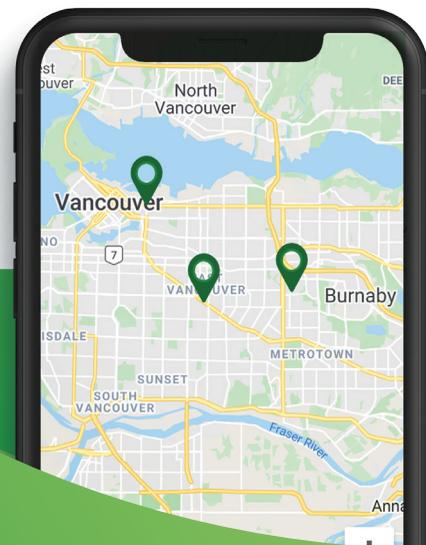


Get your caregiver-friendly pharmacy on the map

Teva Canada's free, accredited Continuing Education course, the Caregiver-Friendly Pharmacy Training Program, prepares pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to recognize and support caregivers with tangible resources and tools.

Building a trusted relationship with caregivers is good for your pharmacy: many caregivers will also require pharmacy products and services for themselves and other family members.

Better yet, once you've successfully completed the program, we'll promote your pharmacy by adding it to our interactive map of Canada to show caregivers the names and locations of pharmacies that have been trained to help them!



To register for the CE, and add your pharmacy to the map once you've completed the CE, visit:

[TevaCanada.com/CaregiverPharmacies](https://www.tevacanada.com/CaregiverPharmacies)

This CE has been accredited by CCCEP for 1.5 Continuing Education Units.

Showing sensitivity to LGBTQ patients

WHILE SOCIETY HAS COME A LONG WAY in accepting the LGBTQ population, many of these patients still report insensitivity, lack of awareness, or even outright discrimination in accessing healthcare services in Canada.

Pharmacy technicians can help ease the pain. “Pharmacy technicians are important providers who can participate in creating safe spaces for LGBTQ patients,” says pharmacist James Morrison, director of pharmacy excellence at Whole Health Pharmacy Partners in Burlington, Ont. In fact, along with pharmacist Andrew Schonbe, he has conducted educational webinars on serving the LGBTQ patient population (see “Resources”).

He offers several examples of the role that pharmacy technicians can play. For example, sometimes a patient's name does not match their health card or insurance card, says Morrison. “Pharmacy technicians should approach this issue while ensuring privacy and respect. It is important to use the patient's chosen name in communicating with them, and not any prior name.” Deadnaming—referring to a transgender person by the name they used before they transitioned—can be very distressing to patients.

OPTIMIZING INVENTORY

Some LGBTQ patients require antiretrovirals in the prevention or treatment of HIV. “Medication adherence is paramount in both the prevention and treatment of HIV,” says Morrison. He advises pharmacy technicians involved in inventory management to flag HIV medications required by patients to ensure they are either stocked or ordered prior to patient need. They can also recommend adherence tools offered by the pharmacy, such as refill reminders.

LANGUAGE LESSON

- Cisgender: a person whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth
- Gender dysphoria: the distress many transgender people experience associated with a misalignment in their external gender presentation and their internal gender identity
- Non-binary: a person whose gender is neither male nor female (e.g., Agender, Bigender, Gender fluid)
- Two-spirited: a person who identifies as having both a masculine and feminine spirit. (Sometimes incorporated into the acronym LGBTQ to form LGBT2SQ.)

Source: Canadian Pharmacists Association, A Guide to LGBT2SQ-friendly Language

“Technicians can support the implementation of a standard process in the pharmacy to document chosen names in the patient record,” advises Morrison. “If you're having difficulty finding a patient file due to a name change, use other identifiers, such as birthday and phone number, to locate it.”

Equally important, says Morrison, is using the correct pronouns when referring to patients: he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/their and others. Don't just assume a patient's gender by the way they look, dress or act. “One way to learn a patient's pronouns is to begin the conversation by introducing yourself and your pronouns,” notes Morrison. “For example: ‘Hello, my name is James, and I use the pronouns he/him/his.’ If a patient does

not respond with their own pronouns, ask what pronoun the pharmacy should use.

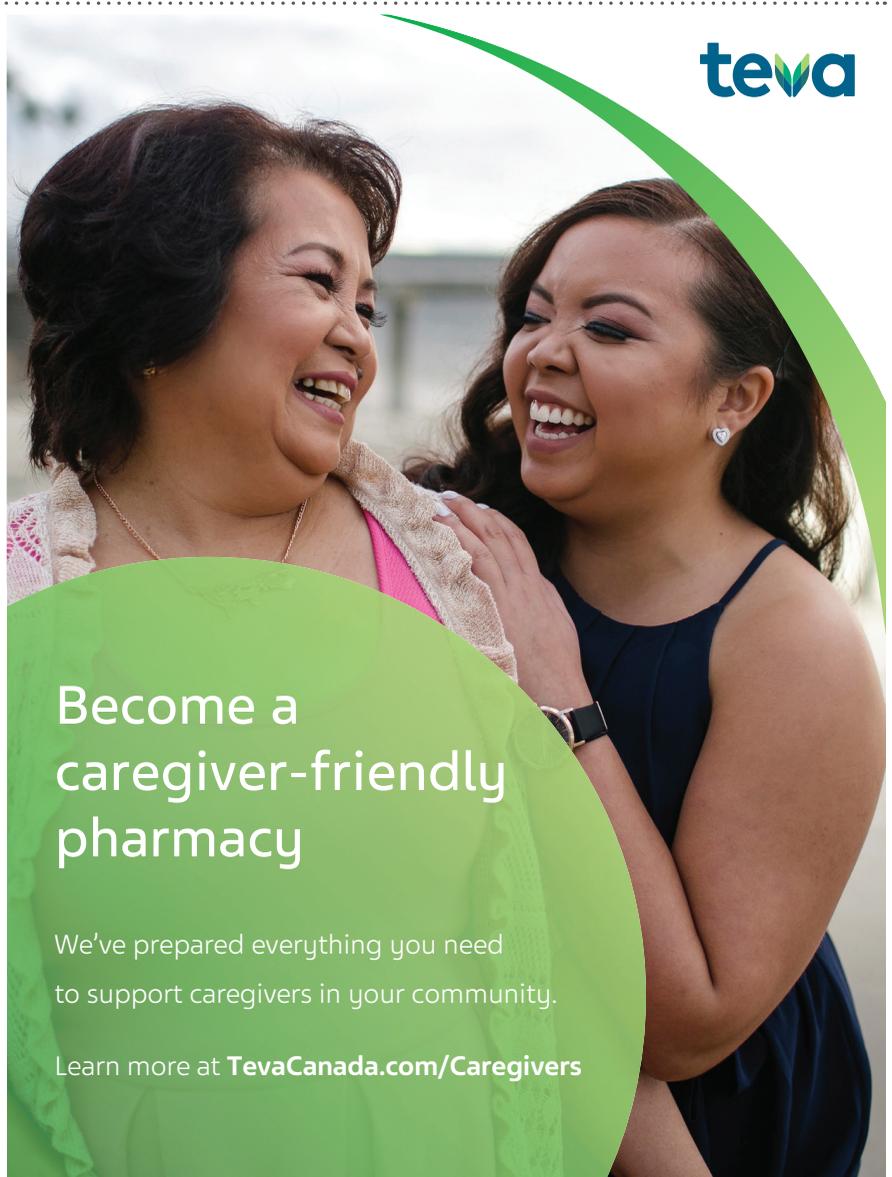
He urges pharmacy technicians to include learning about health disparities and medication therapies as a part of their continuing education studies, and if possible, encourage employers to provide diversity training for all staff.

To create a welcoming environment in the pharmacy, supply LGBTQ-friendly health brochures, post safe space signage, and offer gender-inclusive washrooms.

Treating LGBTQ patients with respect and sensitivity will ensure they receive the care they need at your pharmacy.

RESOURCES:

- “Introduction to the Canadian HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Program for Pharmacy Technicians” www.ccepc.ca/learning_activities/details/introduction_to_the_canadian_hiv_preexposure_prophylaxis_prep_program_for_pharmacy_technicians.html
- Rainbow Health Ontario www.rainbowhealthontario.ca
- Smashing Stigma: LGBT2SQ Engagement in Pharmacy Practice www.pharmacists.ca/news-events/news/smashing-stigma-new-practice-tools-and-more-to-help-your-lgbt2sq-patients/



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