



November 23rd, 2023

Mr. Kane Tse
President, Health Sciences Association
180 East Columbia Street
New Westminster, BC, V3L 0G7
Via Email: Kane.Tse@hsabc.org

Re: Health Sciences Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) Pharmacist Classification

Dear Mr. Tse,

The Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists British Columbia Branch (CSHP BC) is the provincial chapter of a national professional organization dedicated to advancing hospital and health-system pharmacy practice in Canada. Pharmacists practicing in hospital, long-term care, ambulatory clinics and primary care networks in BC are represented by the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA), led by the Health Sciences Association (HSA). Many of these pharmacists are also CSHP BC members, and have expressed concerns with the new profile-based HSPBA classification redesign.

As medication experts, pharmacists are integral members of healthcare teams and collaborate with other health professionals to optimize patient care. Pharmacists have different roles and responsibilities depending on their level of training and clinical skills. We stand by our members who feel that this new classification misrepresents the differentiation of roles, responsibilities, and level of training between pharmacists with primarily distribution responsibilities (currently classified as Grade 1) and clinical pharmacists providing direct patient care (currently classified as Grade 2), who will now be grouped together under the new P1 Working Professional category. To qualify for clinical pharmacist positions, pharmacists must complete a post-graduate, accredited hospital pharmacy residency program or have equivalent experience. Classification of clinical pharmacists as P1, as proposed, fails to recognize the advanced level of training and expertise required to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

CSHP BC is in support of pharmacists practicing to their full scope, and recognizes the important role all pharmacy staff have in our health care system, from medication distribution to direct patient care. Pharmacists, particularly those in advanced practice roles, also participate in education, quality improvement and research activities, in addition to routine patient care activities. We strongly believe that additional training and experience beyond the level of an entry-to-practice pharmacy degree ensures pharmacists can provide the highest quality of patient care.

Accredited pharmacy residency programs are avenues for advanced education to further develop and refine the clinical practice skills and knowledge clinical pharmacists need to be proficient. A classification system that no longer provides differentiation for pharmacists who have completed an accredited residency will discourage pharmacists from pursuing advanced training to elevate their clinical skills and education to better perform patient care activities. In the longer term, fewer pharmacists pursuing advanced training will erode the level of clinical expertise of health authority pharmacists, which will impact the quality of care for patients in BC.

The Ministry of Health's new health workforce strategy aims to address ongoing health human resource challenges and improve access to health care, including expanding scope of practice for pharmacists. Our shared goal should be to encourage advancement in education and skills that improves patient care and alleviates strain on the healthcare system. In order to do so, differentiation between roles, responsibilities and level of training needs to be both recognized and appropriately compensated.

CSHP BC recognizes the efforts by HSPBA and HEABC to modernize the classification system to keep pace with our evolving health care system, and ensure health care professionals are paid appropriately for the work they do. We welcomed the opportunity to meet with HSA earlier this spring to discuss concerns with pharmacist classification, and were advised members will have the option to submit a profile match objection in the fall. With that process now complete, CSHP BC strongly advocates for HSPBA and HEABC to work collaboratively with health authority pharmacists and leadership to revisit the pharmacist classification profiles and work towards a solution that recognizes the value of additional clinical education required by clinical pharmacists caring for patients in complex practice settings.

Sincerely,



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