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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Attention: Health/Lifestyle Section Editors

Clinical Services Guidelines another first for Alberta pharmacists

Edmonton, AB – One of the key reasons why Alberta pharmacists stand poised to play a bigger role in primary health care is because they already have the tools they need to expand clinical services thanks to the made-in-Alberta Clinical Services Guidelines.

The Clinical Services Guidelines (CSGs) – a toolkit designed to carefully guide pharmacists in expanding their scope of practice – were pioneered by the Alberta Pharmacists' Association (RxA), a key lobbyist in the regulation change to the Health Professions Act announced yesterday by the Alberta government.

Since their development, the CSGs have been licensed by RxA to three other provinces: BC, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. RxA has effectively opened the door to new professional opportunities for pharmacists in other jurisdictions.

"Western Canada's adoption of the CSGs establishes the Alberta approach to clinical services as a best practice," said RxA CEO Barry Cavanaugh. "This comes as no surprise given that Alberta pharmacists have been on the leading edge of expanded scope of practice for some time.

"RxA has been working hard to communicate to the public and other health care providers that pharmacists are highly skilled health care professionals who are well-qualified and trained to do so much more than simply dispense drugs. Through a step-by-step process, the CSGs show pharmacists throughout Canada how to put their knowledge and passions into practice by providing valuable clinical services to their clients," added Cavanaugh.

"The CSGs enable pharmacists to evaluate their client population, determine the key needs, and prepare a clinical service or services to enhance clinical care. Pharmacists in Saskatchewan who have taken the complementary course for the CSGs are excited about providing additional services far beyond the dispensing of medications," said Brett Filson, executive director, RBSP, the pharmacists association in Saskatchewan.

Examples of clinical services that may be offered by pharmacists include:

- Structured medication reviews (one-on-one consultation with clients to assess his or her medication therapies)
- Home visits
- Medication and disease information
- Natural medicine consultations
- Disease prevention and management clinic and consultations (asthma; depression; diabetes; heart health; influenza vaccination; men's health including erectile dysfunction; osteoporosis; pain management; smoking cessation; women's health including hormone replacement therapy counseling and menopause symptom reduction; weight loss and nutrition consultation; anticoagulant management clinic; travel medicine clinic; health parameter monitor training including blood glucose and blood pressure).

“Pharmacists have the pharmaceutical expertise and patient relationships to assume a greater role in optimizing the health care of Canadians,” said Cavanaugh.

Provincial and federal commissions, reports and task forces such as the Mazankowski Report, the Lowy Commission and the Romanow Report have vocalized the need for change, opened discussions for new health care delivery opportunities and acknowledged the potential for pharmacists to broaden their involvement in Canada’s health care system.

“Pharmacists can have a pivotal role in health care reform, and can improve health care delivery and patient outcomes in this country through their willingness to be part of new and unique care opportunities. The CSGs provide pharmacists throughout Canada with the tools they need to play an even more vital role as health care providers – integral members of any patient’s primary health care team,” added Cavanaugh.

RxA was launched in 2000 as the professional advocacy body and voice for Alberta pharmacists. Representing more than 2,500 pharmacists throughout the province, RxA’s mission is, through leadership and advocacy, to promote and support the value of pharmacists as primary health care providers.

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