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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Attention: Health/General News Editors

Alberta pharmacists celebrate date set for prescribing authority

Edmonton, AB – The Alberta Pharmacists' Association (RxA) says that Alberta pharmacists have made history by reaching a major milestone this week with the Alberta government's proclamation of the Health Professions Act (HPA) and Pharmacy and Drug Act (PDA), giving them prescribing authority and other opportunities to expand their scope of practice.

Approved in an Order In Council earlier this week, the HPA and PDA will come into force on April 1, 2007, forever changing the landscape of the pharmacy profession in Alberta.

"This is a huge and unprecedented achievement for Alberta pharmacists. The Alberta government's forward-thinking legislation is catching up with the reality of the profession and giving pharmacists the legal right to do what they've been trained to do and, in many cases, have been doing all along," said Barry Cavanaugh, RxA CEO.

Next spring, Alberta pharmacists will be able to prescribe some drug treatments, continue prescriptions made by other health practitioners and administer injectable drug treatments, such as vaccines. Overall, Alberta residents will have better access to drug treatments, particularly more basic prescriptions or in instances where prescriptions need to be extended.

"This is a hopeful time for health care in Alberta. Alberta pharmacists stand ready to deliver a new level of service to their customers and patients," added Cavanaugh. "RxA will support them in this effort by providing them with an advanced, ongoing continuing education program, and the made-in-Alberta Clinical Services Guidelines -- a toolkit specifically designed by RxA, licensed in three other provinces, to help them expand their scope of practice.

"We are also in discussions with government regarding recognition of, and compensation for, the new services pharmacists will be providing. Pharmacists will no longer be regarded as simply drug dispensers and will be seen as an integral part of any primary health care team. We look forward to collaborating with physicians, nurses and other health care providers in the interest of better health care for all Albertans," said Cavanaugh.

RxA was launched in 2000 as the professional advocacy body and voice for Alberta pharmacists. Representing more than 2,100 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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