

Pharmacist Awareness Month

March is Pharmacist Awareness Month. Pharmacists are medication experts and help to optimize resident health and well-being. In recent years, the scope of practise for pharmacists has expanded. Pharmacists are now able to take on even more to optimize drug therapy.



Did you know that pharmacists can....

Renew Prescriptions

In patients who are stable on a medication to treat a chronic condition, pharmacists can renew a prescription if appropriate. The maximum length of the renewed prescription is 6 months, or the length of the original prescription.

For example...

A resident has been taking metoprolol 25mg twice daily and apixaban 2.5mg twice daily for 2 years for atrial fibrillation. Her 3 month medication review is due and her prescriptions will expire tomorrow. The attending physician is away on holiday for 2 weeks and the covering physician does not sign off on 3 month medication reviews. The medications are well tolerated and the resident is clinically stable (the pharmacist assessed the resident and reviewed all pertinent information). The pharmacist renews the prescriptions for 3 months and leaves a note for the physician documenting the decision.

Adapt Prescriptions

Pharmacists can make changes to prescriptions to ensure patients are receiving the most appropriate drug therapy. These changes could include: changing the form of a medication (e.g. from capsule to liquid), changing the frequency (e.g. from twice daily to once daily) and/or dose of a medication. The change would only be done with consent and the reason would be documented and shared with the physician.

For example...

A resident is started on gabapentin 300mg twice daily. This medication can cause drowsiness and dizziness in older persons, so it is best to start at a low dose. The pharmacist lowers the dose to gabapentin 100mg at bedtime, which could be gradually increased to the target dose as tolerated. The pharmacist documents the reason for the decision and notifies the prescriber.

Administer Vaccines

Pharmacists can administer a variety of vaccines, including influenza and travel-related vaccinations. In order to administer injections, pharmacists need to complete an approved injection training course and register their training with the Ontario College of Pharmacists.

