

**RxA is recognized by Alberta Health as a representative association for pharmacists in Alberta. In no more than 1000 words, describe "How does RxA advocate for the pharmacy profession? As a practicing pharmacist, what will your role be in advocating for the profession? How do you feel you will be able to have an impact?"**

The Alberta Pharmacists Association (RxA) is a not-for-profit, membership-based association that plays a pivotal role in advocating for the profession of pharmacy in Alberta, supporting pharmacists in diverse practice settings to provide the best care to patients across the province and beyond.

RxA performs its roles of advocacy and advancement of the pharmacy profession in Alberta through stakeholder engagement about the value of pharmacist services, advocating appropriate compensation and recognition of pharmacists, and inspiring excellence in the profession through instituting scholarships, meeting training needs of members, providing tools and resources, and leadership development.

Two major ways that RxA achieves its broader objective of advocating for the pharmacy profession are: -

1. By educating pharmacists in Alberta, to provide the best care to their patients and the community.

This is achieved through exclusive conferences on practice relevant topics, Continuing Education webinars and structured online learning on the GoPharmacist learn platform.

2. By supporting pharmacists in the province, through useful tools and quality feedback to stakeholders.

Albertan Pharmacists are supported with quality resources in the area of biologics and specialty pharmaceuticals, practice guidelines, and professional materials. As a membership-based organization, RxA represents the interest of pharmacists at various levels, including government policy development and implementation, such as the Alberta Netcare initiative (Alberta's Electronic Health Record (EHR) initiative), engagement of pharmacists in public funded vaccines and Opioid dependency program, issues relating to the certification of pharmacists and engagement with third party payers such as health care insurance companies.

RxA also offers many useful publications for pharmacists in the province. They include: -

- The Capsule – a weekly newsletter which connects members with current news, events in pharmacy and other healthcare fields, new research by pharmacists, trending, and cutting-edge topics of discussion.
- Members Matters Chat Group
- Members only Marketplace
- Wage Surveys
- RxA's Annual Reports
- RxPress – a quarterly publication which features pharmacy news stories from around the province, features and profiles on pharmacists, information on new products, industry news and research developments.
- Practice Based Research papers.

Other relevant support tools provided by RxA include but not limited to:

- Offering claims-made professional liability insurance through the Canadian Pharmacists Benefits Association (CPBA),
- Relief Buddy app,
- access to legal services,
- the RxA ENVIRx program.

In addition, RxA:

- Regularly meets with stakeholders across all levels
- Regularly meets with elected officials and pharmacists locally through RXA's Leadership Cohort.
- Recognizes Albertan pharmacists through awards and recognition through the following means:
  - Alberta Pharmacy Excellence Awards (APEX Awards)
  - Advancing the Profession Scholarship, which awards up to two scholarships annually in conjunction with TD Insurance and the Canadian Pharmacists Benefits Association.
  - Advancing the Profession Scholarship, which supports internationally trained pharmacists currently enrolled in the Certificate to Canadian Pharmacy Practice (CCPP) program.
- Assists Albertan Pharmacists in Getting Involved and Getting Going
- Does a good job of educating Albertans on:-
  - the different services pharmacists provide,
  - the information that can be asked from pharmacists, and
  - the information that can be provided to pharmacists.

### **As a practicing pharmacist, what will your role be in advocating for the profession?**

In a few months, I will be joining this honourable profession of pharmacy and serve the people of Alberta. One way I intend to be an advocate for our profession is through interactions with patients at the community level. Pharmacists are known to be first point of care for many patients in Canada, and I will draw from the rich pool of knowledge gained from in the CCPP program and provide quality care to patients to further the physical and mental wellbeing of Albertans.

I intend to aspire to leadership with RxA, specifically to become a member of the RxA Leadership Cohort and actively build relationships and leadership networks to advance the role of pharmacists in the Alberta healthcare ecosystem. As a new entrant into the profession in Canada, I came with fresh minds and a wide range of experiences from all over the world and I am excited to bring these to bear in support RxA in achieving its advocacy work.

I believe that part of the advocacy work needed is the mobilization of support for RxA among new entrants into the profession to appreciate the vital work that RxA does. RxA is as strong as the support it gets from within, and I intend to be a voice for RxA among the CCPP 2021/2022 cohort and beyond.

### **How do you feel you will be able to have an impact?**

I will actively seek opportunities to meet with pharmacists in my area. I will also seek to create new avenues for internationally trained pharmacists to come together and support the initiatives of RxA.

Within the next 12 months, I will collaborate closely with a Senior RxA official and arrange a meeting with the following people: -

- with Jason Luan, the Member of the Legislative Assembly representing my Electoral division (12 Calgary-Foothills), and
- Pat Kelly, the Member of Parliament representing my electoral district (Calgary Rocky Ridge).

The focus of the meeting would be to appreciate them for their great work in furthering public health in Alberta and Canada, to build a relationship with them and bring to their attention the work of RxA and how they can be a voice for RxA and pharmacists at their various levels of government. I will also share with them how various government policies and healthcare budgets are impacting on the health of the patients I interact with daily

Furthermore, I will reach out to Internationally trained pharmacists in Canada, highlighting the unique Pharmacist Practice Model that we are privileged to have in Alberta and the support that the practice receives from RxA as a model for others to emulate

In closing, I believe the province of Alberta is privileged to have an impactful association like the RxA that is at the forefront of advocating for the pharmacy profession in the province and beyond. This has made pharmacy outlets in the community become a "community of care" in which all health care professionals work together for the benefit of individuals and families. I consider this enviable, one that RxA should be immensely proud of.

**Alberta has the widest scope of practice in the world. In no more than 1000 words, describe "What work has RxA done to achieve this scope and complementary reimbursement model? How will you use your experience to support and practice the profession once licensed?"**

It is amazing the work that RxA has done to ensure the widest scope of practice possible for Alberta pharmacists. This stellar work done by RxA has ensured that pharmacists in the province are seen as care providers, not just dispensers of drugs. It is a shift from the "product centric" patient care model, to one that focuses on the patient as the center point to providing care, otherwise referred to as a "patient centric" care model.

In Alberta, pharmacists are supported in this capacity by a scope of practice which includes:

- Additional Prescribing Authorization (APA);
- Authorization to Administer Drugs/Vaccines by Injection; and
- Authorization to Order and Interpret Laboratory Tests.

Following the expanded scope of practice, RxA worked with government to introduce compensated pharmacy services in Alberta on July 1st, 2012. This funding framework compensate Alberta's pharmacists for offering these pharmacy services to Albertans and provide them with the opportunity for more involvement in the health outcomes of their clients and patients. It also encouraged pharmacists in Alberta to embrace and adopt their full scope of practice to the benefit of all Albertans.

This raised the profile of pharmacists in the province and increased the level of impact they are able to deliver across to Albertans, resulting in a huge growth in monthly Pharmacy Service claims.

Specifically, Alberta College of Pharmacy developed the Additional Prescribing Authorization (APA) which allows Clinical Pharmacists prescribe Schedule 1 drugs and blood products.

RxA developed the *Preparing to Apply for Additional Prescribing Authorization Course* to help pharmacists understand and navigate the process to apply for and receive their Additional Prescribing Authorization (APA). This has become an invaluable asset in isolated locations in remote regions of Alberta. It has helped many patients and helped ease the physician shortage.

RxA also developed the *Administering Injections and Immunizations Preparation Course* to support pharmacist training and ability to provide injectable medications within their authorized scope of practice for both intramuscular and subcutaneous injections.

RxA successfully negotiated Alberta's Pharmacy Services Framework and implemented Comprehensive Annual Care Plan (CACP), Standard Medication Management Assessment (SMMA), prescription adaptation and unprecedented access to a patient's EHR. Smoking cessation and diabetes SMMA's, along with initial access prescribing, were also included. Point of Care Testing can now provide valuable services at our pharmacy counters and in our counselling rooms. All of this, while we monitor flu outbreaks, supply naloxone kits, navigate third party plans, deal with manufacturer shortages, contaminations and still give patients important information on pharmaceuticals and diseases.

Also, RxA has been instrumental in crafting the 10-year vision and roadmap for pharmacy practice in Alberta.

In 2019, RxA working in conjunction with Alberta Health (AH), Alberta Blue Cross (ABC) agreed upon a two-year extension to the Pharmacy Compensation Framework Components without the Holdback Policy Provisions.

Due to the impressive work done by RxA, Pharmacists in Alberta are able to provide services beyond drug dispensing. These services include:

- Being the first point of contact for a new prescription or treatment
- Adjusting existing, doctor-prescribed medications
- Providing one-on-one counsel to patients, such as comprehensive medication management and substance abuse counselling
- Order lab tests for further analysis of a patient's condition and potential prescriptions or treatments
- Recommending over-the-counter products to deal with less serious conditions
- Educating patients on storage and disposal of medicine
- Providing supportive treatment for minor injuries and ailments such as burns, colds, and flu
- Administering injections, including travel vaccinations
- Pharmacist led smoking cessation programs.

### **How will you use your experience to support and practice the profession once licensed?**

As an internationally trained pharmacist with rich experience in pharmaceutical care, Sales, Marketing, and Training, and my unique knowledge and skills acquired in the course of becoming a licensed pharmacist in Canada through the Certificate to Canadian Pharmacy Practice, I will use my experience to support and practice the profession in the following ways: -

#### **Educate**

I will educate my patients to know more about the prescriptions I am dispensing to them. Where I am in doubt, I will consult my reference. I will provide them with useful information on how they can better manage their health conditions.

#### **Counsel**

I will be patient and create ample time to provide my patients with the right counsel and advice they require per time. I will make the pharmacy a safe place for anyone and everyone who visits the pharmacy so that they know how to live better with a condition, how to manage multiple medications and supplements, and how to maintain as much control over their health outcomes as possible.

#### **Prescribe**

After obtaining one year of full-time experience in direct patient care, I will apply for and obtain my APA so that I can be in a position to write prescriptions, for a variety of issues, and also adjust existing prescriptions from prescribers where necessary.

## **Administer**

After successfully completing the *Administering Injections and Immunizations Preparation Course*, I will administer vaccines and injections to help prevent conditions like the flu, shingles, pneumonia and Covid, etc.

## **Access**

As I acquire more and more experience as a pharmacist in Alberta, I will leverage on the support of my colleagues to assess and treat certain illnesses allowed for pharmacists in Alberta. For example, many pharmacies are equipped with portable, rapid strep throat testing. Once the test results are available, I can then prescribe the appropriate medication if required.

## **Advocate**

When I identify issues with prescribed medications, I will not fail to advocate on behalf of my patients because I am well positioned to identify Drug Related Problems and work collaboratively with the prescribers to ensure patient safety.

In closing, I would like to use this opportunity to appreciate the great work done over the years by the board and staff of RxA to ensure that pharmacists in Alberta are supported and educated. This has engineered a win-win scenario for the people of Alberta and has become a shining example worthy of emulation in other Canadian provinces and other parts of the world. Well done, RxA.

## **REFERENCES**

**RxPress – Fall/Winter 2019**

[https://rxa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RXPRESS\\_MAGAZINE\\_FALLWINTER2019\\_WEB.pdf](https://rxa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RXPRESS_MAGAZINE_FALLWINTER2019_WEB.pdf)

**The Alberta Pharmacists Association (RxA) Website**

<https://rxa.ca/>

**Supporting Pharmacist Expanded Scope of Practice Inquiry into the establishment of a pharmacy council and pharmacy ownership in Queensland**

<https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/com/HCDSDVPC-48D8/RN1256PIQ-1FCA/submissions/00000109.pdf>

**Alberta College of Pharmacy: Message from the Registrar: Reflecting on 10 years of new opportunity - Part 1**

<https://abpharmacy.ca/articles/message-registrar-reflecting-10-years-new-opportunity-part-1>

**Pharmacy Agreement Amendment: FAQ March 1, 2019**

<https://rxa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RxA-PHARMACY-AGREEMENT-AMENDMENT-FAQ-FINAL-March-1-9-am-3.pdf>

