

Part 1: Alberta has the widest scope of practice in the world and RxA is recognized by Alberta Health as a representative association for pharmacists in Alberta. In no more than 1000 words, describe how RxA advocates for the profession and what work it has done to achieve this scope and complementary reimbursement model.

Alberta Health recognizes RxA as a representative association for pharmacists with one of the widest scope of practice in the world. It is a membership-based association that operates as a non-profit organization. The dedicated Board of Directors is focused on building a solid foundation for the success of pharmacists. RxA carries out its functions by focusing on three overlapping domains: advocacy, education, and support. Advocacy involves promoting and supporting policies and initiatives that enhance access to healthcare and improve patient outcomes. Education is about providing training and resources to healthcare professionals to help them deliver the best care possible to their patients. RxA supports pharmacists by providing a variety of resources to pharmacists, including training and education programs, business development tools, and networking opportunities. By providing these resources, it aims to help pharmacists build successful practices that can better serve their patients. These three domains are interconnected, and RxA's work in each area contributes to its overall mission of improving healthcare outcomes for all.

The association plays a pivotal role in championing the recognition of pharmacists by performing several advocacy functions. Its primary objective is to represent pharmacists in engagements with various stakeholders, including elected and government officials, other health professionals, pharmacists and pharmacy students, patient advocacy groups, and the community. This representation improves the visibility of pharmacists' roles and responsibilities, which ultimately leads to better healthcare outcomes for the community. RxA has accomplished several remarkable feats in advocacy, but none have been as impactful as the Pharmacy Services Framework negotiation with the Alberta government in 2012. By establishing a Compensation Plan for pharmacy services, pharmacists in Alberta were given the recognition they deserved for their vital contribution to healthcare. With an expanded scope of pharmacy but no reimbursement for those services, the profession would not have been sustainable. This framework not only incentivized pharmacists to offer their services to Albertans but also empowered them to play a more significant role in improving the health outcomes of their patients. In fact this radical move by RxA in advocating for the profession of pharmacy has even made it the center of multiple research papers throughout the world wherein the expanded scope of pharmacists is now referred to as the “Alberta model for pharmacy practice.”

RxA offers a specialized course designed to assist pharmacists in preparing their applications for Additional Prescribing Authorization to the Alberta College of Pharmacy. This course provides a valuable resource for pharmacists seeking to enhance their skills and expand their scope of practice, equipping them with the knowledge and expertise necessary to better serve their patients and communities. In 2021 RxA launched BioNavigate a comprehensive program that Assists pharmacists in navigating the increasingly complex world of biologic and specialty pharmaceuticals to support patients and prescribers in selecting the product that best suits their

needs. Another program that RxA launched was the ENVIRx program which recognizes the important relationship between Albertans' health and the environment. Through ENVIRx, yearround, pharmacists promote safe and effective drug use while allowing Albertans to return unused and expired medications to their community pharmacy. RxA also created a Leadership Cohort whose objective is to establish a network of pharmacist leaders across the province who will actively support RxA and advocate for the pharmacy profession to other pharmacists, patients, policymakers, influencers, and elected officials. They also provide firsthand feedback on policies and issues that affect pharmacy practice and profession.

In 2020 when the pandemic hit Canada and most of the primary health clinics had closed their doors to patients, pharmacies stayed open and continued to do what they had been empowered to do which was to serve as patient's first point of contact with the health care system, triage cases, adapt prescriptions, prescribe at initial access, order lab work for patients who require it and administer Covid-19 vaccine. In fact, Alberta pharmacists were the first in Canada to administer the Covid-19 m-RNA vaccine. All of this was only possible due to the strong framework built by RxA in the previous decade and its tireless negotiations with the Alberta government for the welfare of the profession.

In conclusion just like each wave in an ocean paves the way for another wave, in the same way, a wave of advocacy efforts generates a shift in the status quo, leading to a fresh wave of opportunities for further advocacy. As a future practitioner in this field, I cannot help but feel a sense of excitement at the prospect of the profession's ongoing evolution. This evolution is driven by the tireless efforts of RxA advocates who have paved the way with their dedication and hard work. Their contributions have been immensely instrumental in advancing our cause, and it's only fitting that we recognize their efforts and build on the foundation they have laid down.

Part II: As you move forward to become practitioners in Alberta, you will have the responsibility of working in the unique Alberta practice model. In no more than 1000 words, describe how do you plan to utilize your experience to advocate for the profession and make an impact on your patients.

My journey towards becoming a pharmacist started with a strong passion for science and medicine, which led me to pursue a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. I wanted to create an impact in the lives of my patients by being closely involved in their therapy management. Therefore I chose to get my practice license from Alberta since it has the widest scope of practice in Canada.

My field of interest is chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, asthma, and mental health. I believe that as a pharmacist I have a significant role to play in helping patients make positive lifestyle changes to prevent and manage these conditions. By providing education, support, and guidance, I can empower patients to take control of their health and reduce their risk of developing chronic diseases. Through a holistic approach that considers the impact of diet, exercise, smoking, stress, and sleep on chronic diseases, I can make a significant difference in

the lives of my patients. I find it immensely gratifying to see patients improve their health outcomes through proper medication management and adherence.

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Pharmacists can advocate for the profession by collaborating with other healthcare providers to provide patient-centered care and earn the respect of their colleagues. I plan to work with healthcare providers to develop treatment plans that are cost-effective and affordable for the patient. By considering medication costs and insurance coverage, I can help ensure that patients have access to the medications they need without facing financial burdens.

"The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide you're not going to stay where you are." I have tried to make these words my life motto. Every time that I feel overburdened or feel like giving up I remind myself that to provide the best patient care, it is important to stay up-to-date on the latest research and guidelines. I plan to do this by attending continuing education seminars, participating in professional organizations, and collaborating with other healthcare providers to optimize patient care. Only by staying informed and proactive, can I continue to enhance my skills and provide high-quality care to my patients.

My previous work experience in my home country involved dealing with research on new drugs and the impact they had on patient health outcomes. One of the key reasons why research in pharmacy is important is that it helps pharmacists provide evidence-based care to patients. I've seen fresh advances in medicine development and implementation occur simultaneously. Having critically appraised research papers for my project work before, I plan to apply this knowledge to formulate recommendations on safe and effective treatment alternatives for patients based on evidence-based medicine.

"For every shoulder tap that you have made, a person's confidence is fuelled. For every smile you gave, another heart did a backward somersault of reassurance. With a kind word and a listening ear, another soul felt understood and validated. Imagine the magnitude of your work if you continue and meet more people." I remember reading this quote in a social media post a couple of months ago and it has stuck with me ever since. I am a firm believer in the power of kindness and empathy and the impact it can have on patients' overall well-being and adherence to their treatment plans. Patients often come to the pharmacy feeling anxious or unsure about their medications, and a kind and empathetic pharmacist can provide reassurance and support. By taking the time to listen to their concerns and show understanding, I can help alleviate their fears and build trust with my patients. I hope that patients view the pharmacy as a welcoming environment where they can receive straightforward and comforting responses to their inquiries without any criticism. This would be the best way I can advocate for the profession to the patients.

To conclude, pharmacy is not just a profession but a commitment to society. The impact of a pharmacist's work extends far beyond their knowledge and skills; it influences the health and well-being of entire communities. This is what fuels my drive to advocate for the profession of pharmacy and its growth. By raising awareness of the important work that pharmacists do, I can

help to ensure that patients receive the highest quality care and that pharmacists have the support they need to continue making a difference in the lives of patients.