

Essay question: ***Alberta's pharmacy practice model is recognized globally for its innovation and comprehensive scope. Drawing on RxA's advocacy work and achievements, describe in 1200 words or less your vision for how pharmacists can further integrate into Alberta's healthcare system, such as within Primary Care, Continuing Care, or Mental Health and Addictions. How will you contribute to this vision as a practicing pharmacist?***

The Alberta Pharmacists' Association (RxA) is a non-profit pharmacists professional association that is dedicated to advancing the pharmacy profession in Alberta. It is instrumental in making sure that pharmacists can deliver a very high standard of patient care in discharging their duties. RxA achieves its vision "to lead an innovative, inspired, thriving and united profession" partly through its advocacy efforts by meeting with relevant stakeholders, implementing strategies that ensure every pharmacist has a feeling of belonging, encouraging pharmacists to embrace collaborative patient centred care practice and practicing to the fullest possible extent. Part of its mission is providing valuable learning resources and support to ensure pharmacists excel in their expertise.

Alberta is known for its comprehensive and expanded pharmacists' role in healthcare. Its practice model is also well recognized for the exemplary role Albertan pharmacists play in advancing the pharmacy profession, which serves as an inspiration for other pharmacists. It is noteworthy to mention that RxA's advocacy work and achievements are indeed important in achieving this recognition. One notable significance of RxA's advocacy work was seen when Albertan pharmacists stood out on the global stage during the COVID-19 pandemic, because they were able to perform many vital roles such as prescribing for minor ailments, adapting prescriptions, medication management services, ability to perform point of care testing etc., and had even honed their skills in vaccine administration, which could have contributed to the reason they were listed among first healthcare professionals that were authorized to administer the COVID-19 vaccines. Albertan pharmacists' demonstration of their expertise during this period was largely the result of long-standing advocacy efforts and achievements made by RxA through its proactive approach to ensuring that pharmacists are well prepared to adapt to evolving healthcare needs and to support families during public health crises. RxA also ensures that robust compensatory models are in place for these services.

Pharmacists remain the most accessible healthcare professionals and are often the first point of call for patients, since they can be approached in pharmacy care clinics and community pharmacies where prior appointments and waiting times are not a barrier to receiving quality healthcare, thus, the need to further integrate pharmacist services into Alberta primary care is of paramount importance. One way this can be achieved is through the proliferation of the pharmacist-led care clinics and having more pharmacists

demonstrate the ability to achieve the competence to obtain additional prescribing authority status, with effective utilization of expanded roles. The positive ramification of such trend would be seen in terms of cost-effective healthcare, health promotion, improved access to healthcare and even increased professional recognition.

Pharmacists are meaningfully contributing to mental health and addiction care in Alberta, as well as continuing care, however, there is significant potential to strengthen and broaden these roles through advocacy efforts by RxA by means of its innovative policy initiatives, strategic collaborations and adoption of comprehensive care models to enhance pharmacist contribution to patient care, ensuring healthcare sustainability and improving health outcomes in these critical areas.

As a practicing pharmacist, I would contribute meaningfully particularly to primary care by supporting the growth of pharmacist-led care clinics to provide competent healthcare services. I will ensure I demonstrate the competence required for the APA status and practice to my full scope. William Osler once said, "The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease." In the same sense, I will go beyond medications and see the patient as a person first to address the full need of the patient. In addition to providing quality healthcare that is patient centred, I will incorporate social support assessments into pharmacy visits when necessary and making appropriate referrals of patients to social services, to ensure that no stone is left unturned by also addressing social factors that can impact health outcomes. I will also make use of health promotion strategies to promote wellness and reduce the burden of diseases. I will embrace practice models advocated by RxA, as well as ensuring that I am staying up to date with latest professional knowledge and current trends in healthcare that will help me adapt to evolving healthcare needs.

Moving forward, Albertan pharmacists have great potential to meaningfully contribute to achieving a healthcare system that is more accessible and cost effective. As RxA continues to promote the profession through its activities, pharmacists must ensure they leverage on the successes of these efforts to further integrate into Primary Care, Continuing Care, and Mental Health and Addictions. By committing to lifelong learning and advocating for expanded roles that will make pharmacy services to be more rooted in the Alberta healthcare system, I will contribute to this vision and making sure that pharmacy practice in Alberta remains a global benchmark for excellence.