

Medical Laboratory Tests - Accessing, Ordering, Performing, Using or Interpreting: Policies, Standards and Guidelines for Pharmacists

DEFINITIONS

In these standards:

“**Act**” means *The Pharmacy and Pharmacy Disciplines Act*;

“**Collaborative practice environment**” means a relationship between the licensed pharmacist and other regulated health professionals involved in the care of the patient is such that the practitioners can reasonably rely upon the basic skills of the licensed pharmacist to access, order, perform, use or interpret medical laboratory tests, and to access and use patient-administered automated tests in the best interests of the patient;

“**Drug therapy management**” means patient-centered care to optimize safe, effective and appropriate drug therapy, and includes preventing, identifying and resolving drug related problems. Care is provided through collaboration with patients and their health care teams.

“**Patient-administered automated tests**” include point of care and home tests and related medical devices;

“**Pharmacist**” means licensed pharmacist;

“**Practitioner**” means the physician, dentist, nurse practitioner, optometrist, midwife or pharmacist, or other health professional who may be designated as a practitioner pursuant to *The Drug Schedules Regulations, 1997*, who has prescribed the drug for the patient.

“**Public health care institution**” means a designated facility as defined in The Facility Designation Regulations pursuant to The Regional Health Services Act such as a hospital.

“**Test**” means medical laboratory test unless specified, or the context indicates, otherwise.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

EHR Viewer - Electronic Health Record Viewer

eHS - eHealth Saskatchewan

SCPP- Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals

SDCL – Saskatchewan Disease Control Laboratory

AUTHORITY

The Pharmacy and Pharmacy Disciplines Act

The Act authorizes pharmacists to play expanded roles with patient-administered and medical laboratory tests. In particular section 23(3) states:

“23(3) A licensed pharmacist who meets the qualifications set out in this Act and the bylaws, may, subject to the terms, conditions and restrictions on that licensed pharmacist’s license, perform all or any of the following practices:.....

- (c) access and use patient-administered automated tests designated in the bylaws and interpret the results of those tests;*
- (d) access, order, perform, use or interpret medical laboratory tests in accordance with the regulatory bylaws made pursuant to this Act and the regulations made pursuant to The Medical Laboratory Licensing Act, 1994.”*

The Regulatory Bylaws of the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals

SCPP has created regulatory bylaws providing further details in regulating this role of the pharmacist. In particular, they specify what pharmacists are authorized to do, as well as outline record keeping, record reviewing, competency, and follow-up and collaborative care requirements. To summarize, the bylaws:

1. Allow pharmacists to:
 - a) order tests when practicing within public health care institutions according to the institutional policies authorizing such practices. Community pharmacists may not order tests until amendments to the Medical Laboratory Licensing Act and/or regulations are in force recognizing this role of the pharmacist
 - b) access, perform, use or interpret the results of one or more of the tests approved by Council, if the test is indicated to assist with the management of drug therapy for a patient
 - c) access, use, and interpret the results of patient-administered automated tests approved by Council and
 - d) prescribe treatments and devices approved by Council, which are related to the practice of pharmacy in Saskatchewan.
2. Expect that pharmacists should only access tests for patients with whom they have developed a professional relationship
3. Require pharmacists who access tests to have a system in place to ensure the appropriate follow-up care
4. Require pharmacists who access tests to take appropriate follow-up action if the results of the tests are outside of the expected, normal or reference range. Appropriate action may include but is not limited to:
 - a) discussing the results with the patient and/or other members of the patient’s health care team

- b) developing and implementing a plan for ongoing monitoring or management
 - c) revising drug therapy, if authorized within a collaborative practice agreement under Level II Prescribing Authority, or recommending changes to drug therapy to another member of the patient's health care team
 - d) consulting with clinical/medical laboratory staff regarding unexpected or unusual results, and
 - e) recommending to a practitioner who is authorized to do so, repeating the test if there is an indication that a repeat test will yield different results. When recommending a repeated test, the rationale and result must be recorded on the patient's record
5. When pharmacists receive a request from a patient regarding a test, allow pharmacists to provide the patient with the test results if deemed appropriate in the pharmacist's professional opinion. However pharmacists are not permitted to provide an interpretation of the test results unless it pertains to the pharmacist service being provided by the pharmacist.
 6. The foregoing does not apply to pharmacists practicing in public health care institutions, including the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, where the authority of those pharmacists to access, order, perform, interpret and use tests is governed by policies of the institution within which those pharmacists are practicing.

GUIDANCE

The following is intended to provide pharmacists with further guidance in the interpretation of the legislation and application of Council policy.

1. Pharmacists are expected to only access, order, perform, use or interpret tests for which they are personally competent, and to maintain continuing competency.
2. As reflected in the bylaws, it is expected that pharmacists access, order, perform, use or interpret medical laboratory tests for the purposes of drug therapy management only.
3. It is also expected that these services be provided in a collaborative practice environment. The relationship within that environment means a relationship between two or more regulated health professionals that is developed to:
 - a) facilitate communication
 - b) determine mutual goals of therapy that are acceptable to the patient
 - c) share relevant health information, and
 - d) establish the expectations of each regulated health professional when working with a mutual patient

For medical laboratory tests, this also means collaborating with the health system to follow established protocols, and to avoid unnecessary duplication of tests and fragmentation of care.

4. Pharmacists may access the results of tests from the EHR Viewer or other technology as administered by eHS, or from local sources under appropriate arrangements. To access results from the EHR Viewer or other technology administered by eHS, pharmacists must

abide by the requirements of eHealth Saskatchewan.

5. Community pharmacists may only order the following tests upon direction from SCPP when other governing legislation (e.g. regulations under the Medical Laboratory Licensing Act) and provincial protocols as determined by the SDCL and other health authorities are in place:

- Albumin
- Blood glucose
- Blood Urea Nitrogen
- Complete Blood Count
- Electrolytes
- HbA1C (glycolated hemoglobin)
- International Normalized Ratio
- Iron Indices
- Lipid panel
- Liver function (ALT, AST, Alkaline Phosphatase).
- Partial Thromboplastin Time
- Serum drug levels
- Serum creatinine
- Thyroid function
- Total & Direct Bilirubin
- Total Protein
- Urinalysis
- Vitamin levels

6. Community pharmacists may only perform tests according to a medical laboratory licence where needed and upon direction from SCPP when other governing legislation and provincial protocols as determined by the SDCL and other health authorities are in place.
7. Pharmacists practising within public health care institutions may order tests in accordance with policy governing those institutions.
8. Patient-administered automated tests are also known as point-of-care or home tests. Pharmacists may only access, use, perform according to a medical laboratory licence where needed, and interpret such tests upon direction from SCPP when other governing legislation and provincial protocols as determined by the SDCL and other health authorities are in place. This includes being satisfied that sufficient evidence exists to support the reliability of these tests. In the meantime, pharmacists are expected to abide by the guidance found in the following documents posted in the Reference Manual on the SCPP website:
 - a) Role of the Pharmacist in the [Distribution of Diagnostic Products and Laboratory and Diagnostic Testing](#)
 - b) Policy Statement on the Role of the Pharmacist In [Disease State Monitoring, Screening, Testing or Risk Assessment Activities](#)

Questions?
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