



Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists Soci t  canadienne des pharmaciens d'h pitaux

Mission

Committed to the advancement of safe, effective medication use and patient care in hospitals and related healthcare settings.

Engag s   l'avancement de l'utilisation s curitaire et efficace des m dicaments, et des soins aux patients dans les  tablissements de sant .

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The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy

Le Journal canadien de la pharmacie hospitali re

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Canadian Hospital Pharmacy Residency Board

Conseil canadien de r sidence en pharmacie d'h pital

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## OPEN LETTER

October 6, 2009

Dr. Suzanne Strasberg  
President  
Ontario Medical Association  
150 Bloor Street West, Suite 900  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 3C1

Dear Dr. Strasberg:

We are writing today to express, on behalf of the members of the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists (CSHP) and in particular of our Ontario Branch, our sincere disappointment with the recent advertising and public relations efforts of the Ontario Medical Association's (OMA) Section on General and Family Practice. The messages conveyed in your advertisements and media interviews are designed to alarm residents of Ontario and are frankly demeaning to the qualifications, experience and ethics of pharmacists in this province. They fall far short of what we would consider to be professional standards of communication with patients.

What is perhaps most lamentable about this exercise in advertising and public relations is that it undermines the very commitment your organization made in your recent appearance before the Ontario Legislative Standing Committee on Social Policy. We believe you were sincere in your statement to the Committee that "collaboration between healthcare professionals is the best way to strengthen and enhance the delivery of safe, high quality care to patients." We agree with the position entirely. Yet, the images of a frightened patient your organization placed in a national magazine and the comparison Dr. David Bridgeo made between pharmacists and flight attendants during a Canadian Press interview will do nothing to advance collaboration. Indeed, these messages serve only to erode the trust and goodwill that are essential for collaboration.

CSHP has chosen to direct our communication efforts directly to the Ontario Government and to Ontario's physicians. We understand that change to the healthcare system – even much needed care that enhances access without compromising patient safety – can bring uncertainty during a period of adjustment. Our goal is to reduce uncertainty among patients, not to inflame it. The report *Interprofessional Care: A Blueprint for Action in Ontario*<sup>1</sup>, to which the OMA contributed, advocates for partnership, integration, shared responsibility, communication, foundation-building and supporting change to drive the healthcare transformation agenda, our health work force and enhanced quality of care for Ontarians. If interprofessional collaboration is to succeed in Ontario and across this country we must build public understanding of and confidence in *all* the healthcare professionals with whom they will interact.

Ontario's pharmacists and physicians have indeed worked closely together for more than a century. Our members value the role of physicians and know that measured changes to the services we can provide patients directly will take pressure off your members and allow them to deploy their talents and knowledge to the best advantage of patients. We are committed to working closely with your members to ensure the same trouble-free transition to an expanded role for pharmacists that has already been implemented in a growing number of Canadian provinces and in other countries around the globe.

Sincerely,



Jason Howorko  
President



John McBride  
President, CSHP Ontario Branch

cc: Dennis Darby, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Pharmacists' Association  
Tom Closson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Hospital Association

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<sup>1</sup> HealthForceOntario, Interprofessional Care Steering Committee. Interprofessional Care: A Blueprint for Action in Ontario. Toronto, ON: HealthForceOntario; 2007 Jul [cited 2009 October 5]. Available from: <http://www.healthforceontario.ca/upload/en/whatishfo/ipc%20blueprint%20final.pdf>