



June 20, 2017

Dr. Eric Hoskins
Office of the Minister
Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins,

As the President of the Ontario Branch of Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacist (CSHP-OB), I would like to congratulate you on your ability to have healthcare as a main focus of the recent 2017 Ontario Budget: A Stronger, Healthier Ontario.

CSHP is the national voluntary organization of pharmacists committed to patient care through the advancement of safe, effective medication use in hospitals and other collaborative healthcare settings. CSHP supports its members through advocacy, education, information sharing, promotion of best practices and facilitation of research and recognition of excellence.

There are several areas within the 2017 Ontario Budget which have caught the attention of CSHP-OB and we feel we can offer support to help with continuing to strengthen healthcare in Ontario.

OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare

CSHP-OB applauds your commitment to help children and youth to have access to prescription medications as medications play a crucial role in preventing and treating illness. With cost of prescription medications increasing, helping provide our future generations' access to prescription medications without barriers is a key first step. We would welcome the inclusion of life-saving therapies for rare diseases as part of this plan.

CSHP-OB believes this is a step toward a National Universal Pharmacare system and is delighted to see Ontario lead the initiative. We hope in future budgets, universal access to prescription medications will also be provided to those between the ages of 24 and 65. Health promotion and disease prevention are going to be vital to keep people healthy and to help prevent unnecessary use of our healthcare system. The 24-64 age group, represents a large percentage of our population and ensuring they are not facing financial barriers to accessing prescription medications will be imperative.

Building More Health Infrastructure

It is wonderful to see the government's commitment to major hospital projects across the Province including a new hospital in the Niagara, Windsor, and James Bay regions as well as improvements to hospitals in Hamilton and Mississauga to meet capacity issues and new hospital standards.

CSHP-OB would like to take the opportunity to emphasize the need for continued infrastructure support to ensure hospital pharmacy sterile compounding cleanroom facilities meet National

standards prior to the deadline of January 1st, 2019. Without dedicated funding to support facility upgrades, over 150 hospitals across the Province may be at risk of not meeting standards which may impact the safe delivery of life-saving injectable medications to patients.

Increasing Operating Funding for All Public Hospitals

The three-per-cent increase in operational funding will be very much appreciated by hospitals. Although the focus of the increased funding is targeted to expand access to complex clinical services, keep wait times low, and maintain access to elective surgery, CSHP-OB will continue to advocate for more funding to be targeted to pharmacy operations allowing for improved distribution of drugs and clinical pharmacy services to the patients in both inpatient and ambulatory clinics at hospitals.

CSHP-OB will encourage the Ministry to look at opportunities to improve pharmacy operating hours to be around-the-clock, 24/7, as healthcare is also 24/7. Hospital pharmacists have important roles to play on the collaborative health team and these needs are present at all times.

Investing in Primary Care

We were very pleased to see pharmacists included in your goal to enhance interprofessional primary care teams. Pharmacists currently are not present in many of the Family Health Teams, Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics, Community Health Centres and Aboriginal Health Access Centres. Investments into Primary Care will lead to improved recruitment success for clinical pharmacists by ensuring equitable remuneration when compared to their counterparts in hospitals and community settings.

Primary Care Team Pharmacists will be able to support medication reconciliation, health promotion, disease prevention and chronic disease management in addition to being the medication expert on the collaborative health team.

[Endorsed by the Ontario Primary Care Team Pharmacists (OCPTP) Working Group]

Pharmacist Prescribing

In the most recent budget, the Registered Nurses' Scope of Practice was further expanded to include independent prescribing of specific medications. Nurses are accessible in many healthcare settings, and enabling RNs to independently prescribe medications, may help to minimize a delay or continuation of drug therapy for patients.

CSHP-OB would like to highlight the role that clinical pharmacists' play within the healthcare setting – pharmacists are medication experts. In recent times, pharmacists were given the authority to renew and adapt prescriptions as well as to administer substances by inhalation or injection. Although there are examples of clinical pharmacists in hospital settings practicing at full scope of practice (i.e., Smoking Cessation prescribing, warfarin dosing), we would like to highlight that the expanded scope of practice for pharmacists has not been able to flourish in many collaborative care settings (e.g., ambulatory care centres, hospitals, etc.) as there are perceived barriers with the Public Hospital Act. CSHP-OB would like to work in partnership with you to allow clinical pharmacists to practice to the fullest extent of their expanded scope of in collaborative care settings in an effort to improve patient outcomes.

In addition, CSHP-OB would like the opportunity to discuss further expanding the Pharmacists' Scope of Practice to include collaborative prescribing and de-prescribing of medications. To allow for appropriate prescribing, pharmacists would also require the authority to order relevant laboratory tests for the purpose of medication monitoring, including for chronic disease management. There are important health outcome benefits with pharmacist prescribing and a potential reduction in costs to the overall health system including decreased Emergency room visits and hospital readmissions.

Collaborative prescribing and de-prescribing by clinical pharmacists will help with many of the recent strategies that Ontario has implemented, including actions related to the Opioid Crisis, Antimicrobial Stewardship and chronic disease management such as hypertension.

In conclusion, we anticipate great success and enhanced patient outcomes within the healthcare system in the coming years with the commitments made in the 2017 Ontario Budget.

We look forward to working together to continue to make your vision of Patients First a reality across the Province.

Sincerely,



Ryan Itterman
President, Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists – Ontario Branch