

THE APOTHECARY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2026



The official newsletter of the College of Pharmacy of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Registered pharmacy professionals are responsible for reviewing all information within this publication.

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@CollegePharmNL

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Welcome to the Winter 2026 edition of The Apothecary! Please read all of the content in this issue. If you have any questions or comments please email inforx@cpnl.ca.



MESSAGE FROM THE REGISTRAR

March is Pharmacy Appreciation Month and on behalf of CPNL, I would like to recognize the important contributions that pharmacy professionals make to our healthcare system in Newfoundland and Labrador. Pharmacy professionals' extensive knowledge and skills are critical to providing patients with quality and accessible healthcare. Just as the healthcare system in our province continues to evolve to meet the needs of the public, so does pharmacy professionals' role in delivering care to their patients.

CPNL has heard from several patients in the past year about the exceptional service they have received from their pharmacy teams. The CPNL Board, staff, and I are delighted when we hear about the great experience patients have at their pharmacies and are always happy to share this feedback with the pharmacy professionals and pharmacy teams who have provided the service. As part of CPNL's Working Conditions and Workforce Wellness Action Plan, we are committed to ensuring that good care is acknowledged and pharmacy professionals are made aware of the positive impact they are making in their patient's lives. As such, CPNL will be launching an online compliment form this month, which will allow members of the public to share the positive experiences they have at their pharmacies and share their appreciation for pharmacy professionals all year round.

I would also like to express my appreciation to all the registered pharmacy professionals who have taken the time to provide their insight and feedback to CPNL through participation in consultations and committees this past year. Consultation is a vital component in our document creation and review process, as it is important that we hear from those who will be implementing regulatory standards, guidelines, and policies into their practice so issues can be identified and addressed in the early stages of development. It is also important that we hear from pharmacy professionals about their preferences for receiving communications and engaging with CPNL. This was the subject of our most recent consultation. We were pleased that 114 registered pharmacy professionals participated in this online survey. For a summary of the feedback we received, please refer to the "What We Heard: Engagement with Pharmacy Professionals" article on page 5.

Recently, I participated in a speed networking event with the MUN School of Pharmacy students as part of their Pharmacy Appreciation Month celebrations. I was so pleased to be able to discuss the important role of the regulator and the duty of public protection with those who have chosen to pursue pharmacy as their profession. As I shared with these students some of the knowledge and experience I have gained throughout my years in this profession, I reflected on my own reasons for becoming a pharmacist. Whether practicing in a pharmacy or serving the profession as a regulator, I chose this profession because I have a passion to help people and make a difference in their health and lives. This is a goal that I share with pharmacy professional colleagues who work in a variety of practice settings, such as direct patient care, management, academia, research, and digital health, just to name a few. It is through this shared purpose that the profession and the regulator can work together to achieve our vision of quality pharmacy practice and patient-centred healthcare through leadership and collaboration.

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to all the pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, interns, and students who ensure the people of this province have access to safe, quality, and ethical care. Happy Pharmacy Appreciation Month! I hope you take time to celebrate.

Best Regards,

Noelle Patten



MedSTEP NL— HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2025 NIDR SUMMARY REPORT



1235

Reports of Incidents and Near Misses in 2025

TOP 3 Medication System Stages when incident occurred



Prescription Preparation/Dispensing
1049 incidents



Rx Order Entry
580 incidents



Prescribing
74 incidents

TOP 3 MONTHS INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED



TOP 10 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

1. Interruptions
2. Workload
3. Noise
4. Clutter
5. Competency validation
6. Staffing deficiencies
7. Inefficient workflow
8. Look/sound-alike names
9. Rx given/delivered to incorrect patient
10. Faulty drug identification

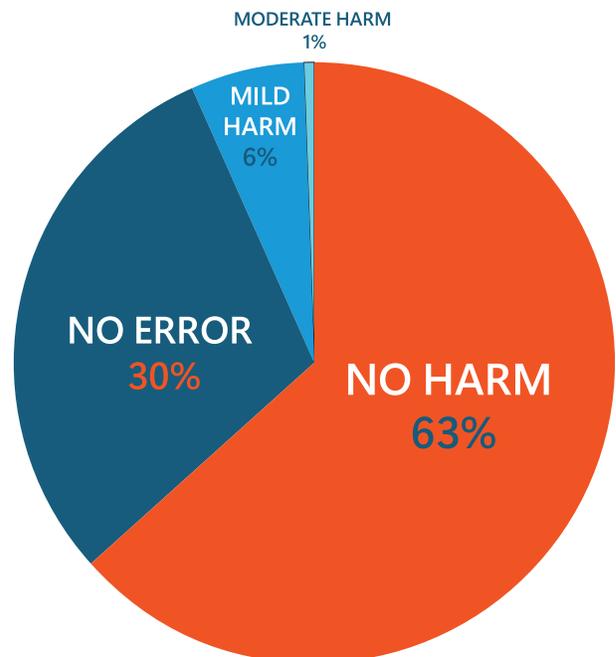
TOP 5 Types of Incidents

1. Incorrect dose/frequency
2. Incorrect drug
3. Incorrect patient
4. Incorrect strength/concentration
5. Incorrect quantity

TOP 3 Discoverer of incident



OUTCOMES*



MedSTEP NL— IMPROVING QUALITY & SAFETY THROUGH SHARED LEARNING

CPNL is committed to providing shared learning opportunities to support pharmacy professionals with engaging in continuous quality improvement with the common goal of reducing the number of medication incidents, mitigating risks to patients, and improving the quality and safety of patient care.

EMERGING QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY CONCERN: PATIENT EDUCATION AND CONSULTATION

Over the past number of months, CPNL has heard from several members of the public expressing concern about not receiving counselling and education from their pharmacists about their medication therapy. These concerns have been reported both anecdotally and through CPNL's complaints and discipline and quality assurance activities. This highlights lack of communication and consultation as an emerging quality and patient safety concern.

The most recent [National Incident Data Repository \(NIDR\) Safety Brief](#) from the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) Canada further supports these concerns, as **"patient education problem" was highlighted as a potential contributing factor in 14% of the reported NL medication incidents causing mild or moderate harm.**

In response to this information, CPNL is reminding pharmacy professionals of their responsibilities to promote the safe and effective use of medication, in accordance with Section 3.9 of the Standards of Pharmacy Operation - Community Pharmacy and all applicable Standards of Practice, by:

- consistently providing patients with information about their drug therapies, with consideration given to whether it's the original fill or a refill of the prescription;
- using a patient-centred approach during patient care activities, including collaborative decision making, using open-ended questions, and adjusting communication to verbal and non-verbal patient cues;
- always providing a patient with the opportunity to ask questions.

In some situations, CPNL has heard that pharmacy support staff have been relaying information to patients on behalf of pharmacists. It is important to recognize that when a pharmacist doesn't speak directly to a patient themselves, information can get lost or misunderstood.

Patient consultation is not only an opportunity for patient education but also serves as an opportunity for a double check to ensure that each prescription matches what the patient expects to receive, to identify preventable medication errors, and build rapport and trust with patients. When patients aren't consulted on their medications or during other patient care activities, medication errors can occur, and risk increases to both patients and registered pharmacy professionals.

ISMP Canada's NIDR Safety Brief offers several tips for pharmacy professionals to optimize patient-centred engagement at prescription intake and at prescription pickup.

SAFETY TIPS:

- Incorporate a pharmacist at prescription intake to collect and verify relevant clinical information, including an earlier double check with the patient (e.g., to confirm the medication, dose, indication, directions for use).
- Use patient-centred approach to counselling (e.g. open-ended questions, opportunities for patients to discuss issues) for new *and refilled* prescriptions.
- At pickup, show the patient and/or their representative the prescription vial contents and label to confirm their understanding and as a final check for accuracy. Ensure informed consent and privacy, as appropriate.



WHAT WE HEARD: ENGAGEMENT WITH PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS

At CPNL we understand that communication and engagement with registered pharmacy professionals is crucial to supporting optimal practice. As such, the development and implementation of an engagement strategy for pharmacy professionals is one of the strategic initiatives in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. As part of that initiative, CPNL recently conducted a consultation to determine pharmacy professionals' communication preferences.

An online survey was sent to all registered pharmacy professionals on January 16, 2026, and remained open for four weeks. A total of 115 responses were received, with 99% indicating that they are currently registered with CPNL. The feedback was stratified across various demographic factors to determine if varied communication strategies are needed across such a diverse profession.

The survey collected information across six communication and engagement categories:

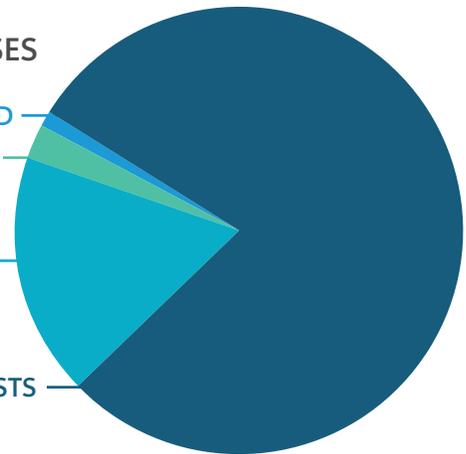
- Notifications and Updates
- Educational Articles and Resources
- Webinars and Educational Courses
- Social Media
- Consultations
- Events

115 SURVEY RESPONSES

1% NOT REGISTERED
3% INTERNS & STUDENTS

18% PHARMACY
TECHNICIANS

78% PHARMACISTS



NOTIFICATIONS AND UPDATES

Currently, CPNL sends out The PostScript once a month by email, which contains various notifications and updates relevant to pharmacy professionals. Over 70% of survey respondents indicated that they scan the article titles in The PostScript and read any articles they deem relevant to them. The majority of respondents indicated that they prefer to receive The PostScript in the current format and frequency, with 54% indicating that they would like to receive updates and notifications in the body of an email and on a monthly basis, while 21% of respondents would rather receive information as it is made available to CPNL. Some of the additional topics that respondents indicated they would like to read in The PostScript include practice tips, answers to recent questions CPNL has received, new treatment guidelines, and best practices based on real-life scenarios.

EDUCATIONAL ARTICLES AND RESOURCES

In addition to The PostScript, CPNL sends out this newsletter, The Apothecary, quarterly, with educational articles, detailed updates to the legislative framework, and information about the operations and role of CPNL. Similar to The PostScript, most respondents (66%) indicated that they scan the articles in The Apothecary for relevance, as opposed to reading all articles or not reading the newsletter at all. Respondents' preference for how often they would like to receive educational articles and resources such as those in The Apothecary were nearly evenly distributed between monthly (43%) and quarterly (41%). The most preferred format that respondents would like to receive these articles and resources is an email notification with a link to an online newsletter, with 31% of respondents selecting this option, compared to 23% who would like The Apothecary to stay in its current format as a printable newsletter. Some of the additional topics that respondents indicated they would like to be included in The Apothecary include, regulation changes in other provinces, frequently asked practice questions, and navigating the complaints and discipline process.

WEBINARS AND EDUCATIONAL COURSES

CPNL hosts webinars to educate pharmacy professionals on changes to legislation, standards, guidelines, and policies, as well as to address common practice questions or issues identified during



WHAT WE HEARD: ENGAGEMENT WITH PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS

48% of survey respondents indicated that they have not attended and have not watched a recording of a CPNL webinar in the past two years.

last two years. Additionally, of the students and interns who responded, none had attended or watched a recording of a webinar in the last two years. Of the respondents who had not participated, 48% indicated that the reason they did not attend was because the time was inconvenient, 21% indicated that they were not interested in the topics, and 20% were not aware that webinars were offered.

Although 19% of respondents indicated they had no preference of what day of the week a webinar should be offered, of those who did indicate a preference, Monday through Thursday were nearly equally preferred. More respondents did indicate a preference of what time of day a webinar should be offered, with 42% preferring evening webinars between 7:00PM and 9:00PM.

Of those who participated in a webinar in the last two years, 67% felt that there were takeaways that they could integrate into their practice immediately, and 28% felt the information was relevant but not specific enough to directly integrate into their practice.

When asked which learning formats they would be interested in participating in, 31% of respondents selected watching recordings of webinars, 29% selected traditional online courses, and 25% selected online microlearning modules.

SOCIAL MEDIA

CPNL currently actively posts on its official Facebook, X (twitter), and LinkedIn accounts. Of these accounts, Facebook was the most followed among respondents. Of the respondents who follow one or more of CPNL's social media accounts, 28% read posts as soon as they are published rather than visiting the accounts on a regular basis.

Over one-third of respondents indicated that they do not follow any of CPNL's social media accounts. This percentage increases amongst younger age ranges, with 50% of respondents 18-24 and 60% of respondents 25-34 indicating that they do not follow any CPNL accounts. Of those respondents who do not follow, 53%

indicated that they were not aware that CPNL had social media accounts and 33% indicated that they do not have accounts on any of the platforms with which CPNL has an account. When asked if CPNL should be on any additional social media channels, the most common suggestion was Instagram.

The top topics that respondents would like CPNL to post to its accounts include upcoming events and webinars (13%), updates to the regulatory framework (12%), upcoming deadlines (12%), third party resources (11%), and facts and tips from standards, guidelines, and policies (11%).

CONSULTATIONS

When reviewing or developing standards, guidelines, policies, or project plans, CPNL often provides registered pharmacy professionals with the opportunity to provide feedback through online surveys or participation in committees or task forces. Participation rates were high among respondents, with 78% indicating that they have participated in a CPNL online survey in the past two years. However, there

pharmacy site visits. However, nearly half of all respondents indicated that they have not attended a CPNL webinar in the last two years. Of those who have participated, 24% watched the recording later rather than attended the live webinar. Webinar attendance was lower amongst pharmacy technicians than pharmacists, with 67% not attending a webinar in the

36% of survey respondents indicated that they do not follow CPNL on social media.



WHAT WE HEARD: ENGAGEMENT WITH PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS

was no participation indicated amongst student or intern respondents. Of those who have participated, 80% feel that their feedback is valued. This feeling is highest amongst pharmacists, with 85% feeling their feedback is valued, compared to only 55% amongst pharmacy technicians. One example shared by multiple respondents

of how feedback has been valued is the incorporation of feedback into the updates to the professional development requirements in 2024. More than 80% of respondents also feel that CPNL is transparent with how consultation feedback is used. Online surveys remains the preferred format for consultations amongst respondents, with 58% preferring to provide feedback this way, followed by 20% preferring to provide feedback by email, and 13% preferring participation in committees.

78% of survey respondents indicated that they had participated in a CPNL survey in the past two years.

EVENTS

Although CPNL staff and board members participate in in-person events relevant to pharmacy professionals that are hosted by key partners on a regular basis, CPNL has not hosted an in-person event for registered pharmacy professionals in over five years. However, CPNL is interested in gauging interest in future in-person events. Nearly 90% of all survey respondents would be interested in attending a provincial conference hosted by CPNL. Over 40% would prefer the event be offered with both an in-person and virtual option, with 23% willing to attend an in-person only event. Nearly 30% of respondents would not be willing to travel an hour or more to attend a provincial conference. This percentage is the highest amongst respondents practicing in the Avalon or Eastern region. Whereas 73% of those located in the Central region are willing to travel 5-7 hours to attend and 54% of those in the Western region are willing to drive 7 or more hours to attend. Willingness to travel by plane to attend a conference was highest amongst those located in the Western and Labrador regions. A full day conference is preferred by 40% of respondents, with this percentage increasing over the half-day conference option for respondents in Central and Western regions. Interest in a multi-day conference was highest amongst those located in the Western and Labrador regions, which may be due to expected travel. The most convenient time of year for respondents to attend a conference is the spring or fall of the year, with 38% of respondents preferring a conference in March, April, or May and 28% preferring a conference in September, October, or November. Of those respondents who were not interested in attending, the top reasons given relate to not having the time to attend, not wishing to travel, and having no interest in or not seeing a need for such an event.

Another event option that CPNL is exploring is regional town halls with question-and-answer periods. The majority of respondents are interested in such an event, with 80% indicating that they are interested in attending a CPNL-hosted town hall in their region. Additionally, 82% of respondents indicated that they are more likely to attend a town hall if professional development is offered at the event. Of those that are interested in attending, 49% would prefer it be held on a weekday evening and 25% would prefer it be held on a weekend during the day. Of those not interested in attending, the reasons given are similar to the reasons not to attend a conference, citing not having time, or having no interest in such an event. Some respondents also stated that they would prefer a virtual town hall instead of an in-person event.

CPNL would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to this survey. The feedback provided will be instrumental in the development of CPNL's updated strategy for engaging with pharmacy professionals. Our goal is to ensure that registered pharmacy professionals receive critical regulatory and pharmacy practice information in an accessible and efficient manner. As we move forward with updating our communication channels and messages, we encourage you to continue to provide your feedback by forwarding any questions or comments to communications@cpnl.ca.



REVISIONS TO STANDARDS OF PHARMACY OPERATION - HOSPITAL PHARMACY

Over the past year, CPNL has undertaken an extensive review of the Standards of Pharmacy Operation – Hospital Pharmacy (SOPO-Hospital). This included operationalizing a task force consisting of hospital pharmacy professionals to aid in the revision as well as a consultation survey that was circulated to pharmacy professionals in December. At a recent meeting of the Board, the revisions to the SOPO-Hospital were approved, with a final implementation date of January 2027.

An introduction was added to the document, which includes definitions, to provide additional clarity. Additionally, the SOPO-Hospital now specifically references that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must practice in accordance with the Model Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians adopted by CPNL.

Several new requirements have been added to the existing standards, including requirements to:

- Develop and implement policies and procedures for:
 - reporting of medication incident and adverse drug reactions as part of the continuous quality improvement program.
 - tracking and traceability of medications to individual patients, including those currently hospitalized and from a historical viewpoint.
 - auditing medication rooms or storage areas of any clinics or hospitals serviced by the pharmacy at least every six months to identify potential medication safety issues.
 - providing medications to patients being discharged from the emergency department or other outpatient departments (if they are unable to obtain them from a community pharmacy within a reasonable time frame).

The following new sections have been added:

- Patients' Own Medications
- Self-Administration of Patient Medications

Additional content or specificity has also been added regarding:

- participation in on-call services;
- pharmacy security and access;
- inventory management, including drug procurement and delivery;
- security and accountability of NCBTs, including storage, security, and prevention of loss and theft;
- medication delivery, as it pertains to community clinics or other facilities;
- medication order requirements, including organizational stop policies and processes surrounding medication holds;
- checking processes, including utilization and documentation of information.

The above lists are not exhaustive and pharmacists-in charge, pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians are encouraged to review the standards in their entirety at their earliest convenience. To review the SOPO-Hospital, visit the [Standards](#) page of the CPNL website.

Hospital pharmacies are required to meet the revised SOPO-Hospital at the earliest possible date but no later than January 2, 2027.



UPDATES TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

The College of Pharmacy of Newfoundland and Labrador Board of Directors approved revisions to the Professional Development (PD) Requirements Interpretation Guide at the February 2026 meeting. Revisions include clarifying the PD requirements during the first year of registration for newly registered pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, and for those who are currently practicing but new to the province. In addition, changes were approved to accept PD programs delivered by an accredited university or college that are relevant to pharmacy practice as accredited learning and to remove the maximum of five continuing education units (CEUs) per course.

FAQs

I graduated from an accredited Canadian pharmacy/pharmacy technician program this year and have registered with CPNL OR I obtained my pharmacy/pharmacy technician education outside of Canada and registered with CPNL this year through the standard international pathway. Do I need to record 15 CEUs before renewing my registration for the following year?

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who register with CPNL as a new graduate of an accredited Canadian pharmacy program or through the standard international pathway do not need to meet the PD requirements in their first year of registration and do not need to document learning activities during that PD period to renew their registration for the following year. They will need to meet PD requirements in subsequent years.

I obtained my pharmacy/pharmacy technician education outside of Canada and registered with CPNL this year through the expedited international pathway OR I am a pharmacy professional that was registered in another Canadian province and registered with CPNL this year through the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. Do I need to record 15 CEUs before renewing my registration for the following year?

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who have been practicing but are newly registered with CPNL through the Canadian Free Trade Agreement or the expedited international pathway

- are required to meet PD requirements in their first registration year if they registered with CPNL before September 1st of the year;
- are not required to meet PD requirements in their first registration year if they registered with CPNL after September 1st of the year. They will need to meet PD requirements in subsequent years.

To review the interpretation guide, visit the [Professional Development](#) page of the CPNL website.

BOARD MEETING UPDATE

The CPNL Board of Directors held a Regular Board Meeting on February 6, 2026. In addition to a presentation of the regular quarterly Operational Reports and Finance and Audit Committee Reports, updates were also provided to the Board on ongoing work on the development of a CPNL Risk Register and the Code of Ethics revision project. Revisions were approved to the following documents:

- CPNL Board of Directors Meeting Procedure Guidelines
- Standards of Pharmacy Operation – Hospital Pharmacy
- CPNL Interpretation Guide – Professional Development Requirements.

Additional work included the approval of revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Pharmacy Practice Advisory Committee and annual appointments to the Complaints Authorization Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee, the Pharmacy Practice Advisory Committee, the Quality Assurance Committee, and the Disciplinary Panel.



BOARD MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Jason Ryan

VICE CHAIR

Shawn Bugden

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Bree Aucoin

Andrew Sweetapple

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES

BOARD-APPOINTED

Terry Foss

Mark Sheppard

GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED

Karen Mercer

Mary O'Brien

NON-VOTING

REGISTRAR

Noelle Patten

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ZONE 1 PHARMACIST

Stephen Coombs

ZONE 2 PHARMACIST

Jason Ryan

ZONE 3 PHARMACIST

Melissa Key

ZONE 4 PHARMACIST

Bree Aucoin

ZONE 5 HOSPITAL PHARMACIST

Justin Peddle

ZONE 6 PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

Jeanie Hinks

ZONE 7 AT-LARGE PHARMACISTS

Colleen Johnson

Andrew Sweetapple

DEAN, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

Shawn Bugden



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Registered pharmacy professionals are responsible for reviewing all information within this publication.



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