

Enhanced Scope of Practice for Pharmacists, Nurse Practitioners and Paramedics

The Government of Saskatchewan is expanding scope of practice for pharmacists, nurse practitioners and advanced care paramedics. The changes will allow these highly qualified health professionals the opportunity to make greater use of their skills and expertise.

Benefits to Patients

- Enhanced, more timely access to a range of health services
- Optimized patient care
- More options to access care for residents across the province, including in rural and remote areas

Benefits to Health Care Teams and the Provincial Health Care System

- Strengthen health care teams
- Support team-based care
- Ease pressures and build additional health system capacity
- Increase efficiencies in practice and care for health providers and patients
- Enhance skill task alignment to support improved workflow and flexibility to support patients

Pharmacists

Pharmacists are located in 424 pharmacies in 125 Saskatchewan communities, which allows them to reach and provide health care service access to residents across the province.

Optimizing scope of practice for pharmacists to allow for independent prescribing, ordering lab tests and conducting point of care testing will provide many benefits, such as:

- Enabling Saskatchewan pharmacists in hospitals and communities to serve patients with pharmaceutical care and medication management;
- Improving timely access to the right level of care and reducing pressures on emergency departments or urgent care centres;
- Improving access to care close to the patient/client's home;
- Improving chronic disease management by supporting patients with care plans, education on medication and non-medical ways to manage disease such as nutrition and exercise, and supporting patients between visits with primary care providers; and
- Allowing increased time for physicians to manage more complex care and potentially extend access to additional patients.

Nurse Practitioners (NPs)

Nurse Practitioners are registered nurses who have completed graduate education that includes an extensive clinical experience. In Saskatchewan, the majority of NPs practice in clinic settings with a primary care focus, often as part of a multidisciplinary team.

Admitting and discharging privileges for NPs provide the following benefits:

- More organized patient experience;
- Improve patient flow within the system;
- Sustain a level of emergency services in more communities within the province;
- Optimization of health human resources; and
- Decreasing unnecessary hospitalizations for patients.

Benefits to optimizing NPs role in special care homes (LTC) include:

- Enabling NPs to have an enhanced presence in the care of residents;
- Assisting with physician workload/availability, especially in areas with recruitment and retention issues; and
- Promoting resident access to timely care, admissions and discharges in LTC, especially in homes where physician services are limited or disrupted.

Efficiencies are achieved in a team-based care model through:

- Addressing multiple patient concerns in one visit, including indirect care;
- Providing continuity of care as patients move through the health system;
- Improving on distributions of responsibilities between team members, including shared responsibility for seeing each other's patients and after hours care; and
- Improved care for patients who need chronic disease management.

Advanced Care Paramedics (ACPs)

ACPs provide an essential frontline service in delivering care around the clock. From rural and remote locations, clinics or hospitals, ACPs offer support and immediate care in many situations.

The expansion to their scope of practice to include suturing will:

- Enable ACPs to provide more effective care to patients across a range of settings and scenarios, potentially reducing transports to the ER;
- Enhance access to this type of care for rural and remote areas;
- Facilitate collaborative emergency room (ER) work, reducing offload delays, and freeing up EMS crews sooner; and
- Reduce high-cost emergency department use.