



National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities [®]
Association nationale des organismes de réglementation de la pharmacie



A Year of Growth and Gain

Annual Report

2019



About Us

Who We Are

NAPRA is an alliance of provincial and territorial pharmacy regulatory bodies and the Canadian Forces Pharmacy Services.

Our Members

Our members regulate the practice of pharmacy in their respective jurisdictions in Canada and their primary mandate is protecting and serving the public interest.

Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities

Alberta College of Pharmacy
Canadian Armed Forces – Pharmacy Services Division
College of Pharmacists of British Columbia
College of Pharmacists of Manitoba
Community Services – Government of Yukon
New Brunswick College of Pharmacists
Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board
Government of the Northwest Territories
Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
Government of Nunavut
Ontario College of Pharmacists
Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec
Prince Edward Island College of Pharmacy
Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals



What We Do

We provide a platform for our members to discuss and take a national approach in addressing common issues in the practice of pharmacy in Canada.

Our Board of Directors

Back row: Lieutenant-Colonel Sean Meredith (Canadian Armed Forces – Pharmacy Services Division), David Collie (external Director), Michelle Wyand (Prince Edward Island College of Pharmacy), Bev Zwicker (Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists), Greg Eberhart (Alberta College of Pharmacy), Jeana Wendel (Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals), Tana Yoon (external Director), David Cameron (external Director)

Front row: Bob Nakagawa (College of Pharmacists of British Columbia), Margot Priddle (Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board), Adele Fifield, NAPRA Executive Director (ex-officio), Nancy Lum-Wilson, Chair (Ontario College of Pharmacists), Sam Lanctin, Vice Chair (New Brunswick College of Pharmacists)

Absent: Manon Lambert (Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec), Susan Lessard-Friesen (College of Pharmacists of Manitoba), Nancy Meagher (Community Services – Government of Yukon), Donna Mulvey (Government of Nunavut), Samantha Van Genne (Government of the Northwest Territories)



A Year of Growth and Gain

Message from the Chair and Executive Director

“A Year of Growth and Gain” is the phrase that describes NAPRA in 2019. You will see why this phrase is so appropriate when you read about new initiatives at NAPRA this year.

As the alliance of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (PRAs) in Canada, NAPRA’s purpose is simple — to serve the PRAs as they pursue their mandate of serving the public interest in pharmacy regulation in their jurisdictions. All of NAPRA’s activities are aimed at assisting our members, the PRAs.

The year 2019 was the first for NAPRA’s 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. In addition to the continuation of the organization’s existing programs and services, the strategic plan includes five specific strategic goals. The strategic plan is shared in this report.

In addition to initiating our exciting five-year plan, other momentous events occurred at NAPRA which are described in some detail throughout this report.

As part of a new board structure, three external Board Directors were added to the NAPRA Board of Directors for the first time in the history of the organization. These individuals immediately brought unique and valuable perspectives to NAPRA’s Board.

NAPRA also began the three-year Pilot Program to Prepare for Practical Training (P4T), a federally-funded project for internationally trained pharmacy graduates.

In response to NAPRA’s commitment to the Joint Statement of Action to Address the Opioid Crisis, initiated in 2016, NAPRA released a pharmacist-patient communication toolkit to provide guidance to pharmacists in having effective conversations with patients regarding opioid use.

While new initiatives were introduced, NAPRA’s ongoing programs and services remained critical and successful. Two core programs which serve the PRAs are the National Drug Schedules, which NAPRA has administered for the PRAs for nearly 25 years, and the Pharmacists’ Gateway Canada, which has registered over 15,000 internationally trained graduates since its inception.

In addition, NAPRA kept abreast of, and actively responded to, national and international issues on behalf of its members. This includes providing feedback during many federal consultations and participating in important collaborative initiatives such as Health Canada’s Self-Care Framework Task Force.

To keep the organization healthy and to enable it to deliver on its five-year plan, NAPRA also underwent a full organizational risk assessment this year. As well, our office and team expanded substantially.

To serve the needs of its members, growth sometimes means winding down programs that have served their purpose or making changes to strengthen ongoing programs. Two significant events that fell into that category in 2019 were the discontinuation of the National Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program, and the decision to remove Natural Health Products from NAPRA’s National Drug Schedules.

This year of growth and gain was only possible because of the amazing working relationship between NAPRA’s Board and its staff. Together we worked hand-in-hand and supported each other to keep the organization moving forward. We are thankful for the dedication and contributions of each of you and look forward to advancing and strengthening NAPRA in its critical role as the alliance of pharmacy regulators in Canada.



*Nancy Lum-Wilson;
Adele Fifield*



N Lum-Wilson

A. Fifield



Mission

National leadership in the pursuit of pharmacy regulatory excellence.

Vision

Best pharmacy regulation, best pharmacy practice, best patient care.

Values

Leadership

We provide strong, innovative and proactive leadership in the regulation of pharmacy practice.

Excellence

We commit to quality in all of our activities to support serving the public interest.

Integrity

We act with integrity, honesty and in an ethical manner with each other, our partners and our stakeholders.

Respect

We recognize, consider and value the contributions and differences of others, and treat everyone respectfully. We resolve issues openly and constructively.

Transparency

We communicate our purpose and objectives clearly. We strive for openness in what we do and the decisions we take.

Collaboration

We value collaboration both within NAPRA and with stakeholders. We seek to build productive relationships at all levels.

Purpose

As an alliance of pharmacy regulatory authorities, NAPRA provides:

1. Leadership on national policy issues;
2. Harmonization of standards to reinforce their credibility, dependability, and acceptance;
3. A national, central point of contact for communication and engagement with pan-Canadian and international stakeholders;
4. A community of practice for pharmacy regulatory authorities across Canada to address common issues and share knowledge and experiences relevant to pharmacy regulation.

Governance

Good governance is a fundamental component of a healthy and productive organization. In 2018, NAPRA announced a new Board structure that would comprise the Registrars of the provincial regulators, representatives of the Territories and the Canadian Armed Forces, and up to three external directors. The transition to the new Board structure was initiated in 2018 when the Registrars became Board members.

Adding external Directors to NAPRA's Board was the subsequent phase of the transition to a new Board structure and this was completed in 2019. Having external Directors also on NAPRA's Board in 2019, for the first time in the history of the organization, brought additional expertise and perspectives that immediately contributed to NAPRA's Board.

The addition of the external Directors to NAPRA's Board was a concluding step in the modernization of NAPRA's governance structure, which had also included a new framework for how the organization uses Committees, Task Forces, and Working Groups to facilitate its work. This framework helps NAPRA ensure that expertise, collaboration and consultation are the cornerstones of its projects and initiatives.



Building Strength and Mitigating Risk



Underpinning NAPRA is a commitment to ensuring it is a strong and resilient organization with a focus on continuous improvement. To contribute to that, in 2019 an in-depth risk assessment was undertaken within NAPRA. This proactive and positive undertaking by the NAPRA Board and its staff team served to support the Board in its important role in monitoring and mitigating risk within the organization.

The comprehensive exercise assessed all areas of the organization from decision making, to financial management, to human resources, to reputational management, and much more. It allowed the organization to identify and analyze risks that could potentially impact NAPRA and impede the fulfillment of its objectives. The assessment confirmed that many risk-reducing actions were already in place and being undertaken within NAPRA regularly. Risk monitoring and opportunities to improve, or for growth and gain as is the theme of this year's report, will be an ongoing part of NAPRA's operations and Board oversight.



2019-2023 Strategic Plan

The year 2019 was the start of NAPRA's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

An integral part of NAPRA's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan is the successful operation and advancement of its current core programs and services:

Mobility Agreement to support labour mobility

National Drug Schedules

Pharmacists Gateway Canada for international pharmacy graduates

National Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program

Standard, Competency and Guidance development

Engagement activities at the Federal government level, and with national and international stakeholders

To provide increased support to its members in addressing their current and emerging concerns, as well as national leadership on priority policy and cross-jurisdictional issues, NAPRA also has five specific strategic goals as part of its five-year plan. Activity on goals 1-4 began in 2019 with initiation of goal 5 planned to begin in a subsequent year.



2019-2023 NAPRA Strategic Plan

In addition to its core programs and services, NAPRA has committed to **five goals**.



Restore the culture of professionalism within pharmacy practice

Develop and support the integration of a clearly defined set of tenets of professionalism into the practice of pharmacy professionals, regulatory authorities, pharmacy employers and other stakeholders



Develop a framework to govern cross-jurisdictional practices within Canada

Establish principles and develop a framework that will allow pharmacy regulatory authorities to govern practices across jurisdictions in the public interest



Modernize key NAPRA documents and to create new standards for the reporting and analyzing of and learning from medication-related incidents

Develop and implement a five-year renewal schedule of NAPRA's documents, including the development of standards and a common data set for reporting and learning from medication-related incidents



Review the role of NAPRA in the National Drug Schedules program

Conduct consultations with its members and stakeholders, including Health Canada, on the National Drug Schedules in Canada and NAPRA's role in providing this program



Establish an impartial assessment framework focused on pharmacy regulatory authority continuous improvement

Explore options for the establishment of an impartial assessment framework, tool and methodology to support the continuous improvement processes of the pharmacy regulatory authorities, in line with best practices in self-governance and regulation

Pharmacists' Gateway Canada

NAPRA's members, the pharmacy regulatory authorities (PRAs), are responsible for licensing all pharmacists in Canada, including any who have been trained internationally in pharmacy, known as *international pharmacy graduates* (IPGs).

Each year thousands of IPGs seek to learn how they might enter the profession of pharmacy in Canada. To help its members manage and inform these IPGs in an effective and efficient manner, NAPRA administers the Pharmacists' Gateway Canada (Gateway).

Implemented in 2014, the Gateway is a central online resource and portal that is accessible anywhere there is Internet access – pharmacistsgatewaycanada.ca. Most of the IPGs who wish to practise in Canada must begin their licensure process for Canada by enrolling in the Gateway portal.

The Gateway guides applicants through each of the steps in the licensure process, helping applicants to:

- understand the practice of pharmacy and the licensing requirements in Canada;
- determine whether one is ready to proceed with the application process to practise pharmacy in Canada;
- identify areas where improvement in pharmacy skills and knowledge may be needed; and
- identify what requirements can be completed before arriving in Canada.

In 2019 there were 3,814 new registrations into the Gateway, a 9% increase over the previous year's number of registrations. By the end of 2019, registrations in the Gateway since its inception have totaled more than 16,000.



www.pharmacistsgatewaycanada.ca
gatewayinfo@napra.ca
613 569-9800



Pilot Program to Prepare for Practical Training (P4T)

To further assist its members and complement the Gateway, NAPRA may, at the request of its members, undertake initiatives that offer solutions to challenges faced by IPGs who seek to practise pharmacy in Canada.

In 2019, with funding provided by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), NAPRA launched one such effort, a three-year Pilot Program to Prepare for Practical Training (P4T).

The objective of the P4T is to develop and implement resources and tools for IPGs to address barriers that may impede the successful completion of mandatory practical training and assessments that may be required prior to being licensed.

The P4T comprises several components:

- **Mentorship:** a mentorship program which will match IPGs with pharmacist mentors willing to share their knowledge and experience with mentees;
- **Diagnostic Tool:** a diagnostic tool to help IPGs identify their learning needs and guide them to appropriate learning modules; and
- **Learning Modules:** learning modules designed to address experiential, learning, and skills gaps in professional communication, cultural awareness and diversity in Canada, and knowledge of the Canadian healthcare system.

In 2019, the P4T successfully developed and launched a trial of the first component of the program, the Mentorship Program. Feedback from participants has been positive:



"To be honest, this mentorship program is one of the best things that could happen to internationally-trained pharmacists because of what we get to gain from it. I have people calling me from all across Canada asking me how I got into this program, and how they can also get into the program. So, I count myself lucky to be in this program and I love it. I think this mentorship program has been awesome."

— Yetunde (mentee)



"Mentorship is really important because it teaches things that are not in the book. I had a mentor 25 years ago when I came to Canada. He taught me and he helped me to become a good pharmacist and I'm doing the same now. I am teaching International graduates and helping them to become good pharmacists. I believe that without the mentorship, without the hands-on experience inside a pharmacy, international pharmacy graduates will not be able to perform the duties in the full scope of practice of a pharmacist."

— Sali (mentor)

National Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program

More than a decade ago, the role of a pharmacy technician became a regulated health profession in Canada. NAPRA's members, who regulate Pharmacists, also became the regulating body for pharmacy technicians.

After it became a regulated profession, anyone wishing to become a pharmacy technician would be required to complete a pharmacy technician training program through an accredited educational program.

However, there were many pharmacy professionals already working in a pharmacy technician capacity at the time the profession became regulated. In response, NAPRA launched the bilingual National Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program (the Bridging Program) in 2013. The Bridging Program was created to assist those individuals already working in the role of pharmacy technician to bridge their learning and experience to become a regulated pharmacy technician without having to return to school to complete a full-time training program. The Bridging program was to be offered for a specified number of years to serve that purpose.

Having served its purpose of transitioning individuals already working in a pharmacy technician capacity to become fully regulated pharmacy technicians, the Bridging Program ended in 2019, having provided more than 10,500 courses and assessments to individuals pursuing licensure as a regulated pharmacy technician.



National Drug Schedules

NAPRA's role in the drug scheduling process occurs after Health Canada has authorized a drug for sale in Canada and determined whether the drug requires a prescription for sale.

While the federal government determines certain conditions of sale, such as the need for a prescription, provincial/territorial governments have the ability to further specify the conditions of sale of drug products. Prior to 1995, each province and territory had its own system for determining the conditions of sale for non-prescription drugs in Canada, leading to wide variability in the way drugs were sold across Canada.

In 1995, NAPRA's members endorsed a proposal for a national drug scheduling model, to align the provincial/territorial drug schedules so that the conditions of sale for drugs would be more consistent across Canada.

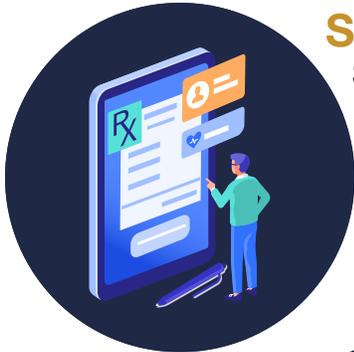
This harmonized national model is administered by NAPRA and is called the **National Drug Schedules (NDS)** program, which consist of three schedules or four categories of drugs (see next page).

The National Drug Scheduling Advisory Committee applies consistent scheduling factors and a standard process to make scheduling recommendations to NAPRA.

The National Drug Schedules (NDS) were maintained and the National Drug Scheduling Advisory Committee completed a review of fluticasone propionate nasal spray in 2019.



Outline of the NAPRA National Drug Schedules



Schedule I

Schedule I drugs require a prescription for sale and are provided to the public by the pharmacist following the diagnosis and professional intervention of a practitioner. The sale is controlled in a regulated environment as defined by provincial pharmacy legislation.



Schedule II

Schedule II drugs, while less strictly regulated, do require professional intervention from the pharmacist at the point of sale and possibly referral to a practitioner. While a prescription is not required, the drugs are available only from the pharmacist and must be retained within an area of the pharmacy where there is no public access and no opportunity for patient self-selection.



Schedule III

Schedule III drugs may present risks to certain populations in self-selection. Although available without a prescription, these drugs are to be sold from the self-selection area of the pharmacy which is operated under the direct supervision of the pharmacist, subject to any local professional discretionary requirements which may increase the degree of control. Such an environment is accessible to the patient and clearly identified as the “professional services area” of the pharmacy. The pharmacist is available, accessible and approachable to assist the patient in making an appropriate self-medication selection.



Unscheduled

Unscheduled drugs can be sold without professional supervision. Adequate information is available for the patient to make a safe and effective choice and labeling is deemed sufficient to ensure the appropriate use of the drug. These drugs are not included in Schedules I, II or III and may be sold from any retail outlet.

Natural Health Products

NAPRA's National Drug Schedules (NDS) were developed before Health Canada began regulating the sale of Natural Health Products (NHPs) in Canada. When the *Natural Health Products Regulations* came into force in 2004, many products that were included in the NDS became re-classified as NHPs by Health Canada.

NAPRA determined that NHPs were beyond the scope of NAPRA's NDS. The requirements for authorizing NHPs for sale in Canada are different than for traditional non-prescription drugs, and the conditions of sale of NHPs cannot be fully addressed against the NDS scheduling processes.

However, NAPRA had agreed to maintain the ingredients that were already listed in the NDS on an interim basis. The interim measure only addressed the risk of a small subset of NHPs while others were available to consumers without directed conditions of sale. In 2019, NAPRA determined that this disparate approach was no longer in the best interest of the public, and decided to remove all NHPs currently listed within NAPRA's NDS in a stepwise, risk-based approach:

1. Effective January 2, 2020: NHPs that were listed within the Unscheduled category and within Schedule III were removed from the NDS. *At Health Canada's request, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were to continue to be subject to the conditions of sale as outlined in NDS Schedule III until January 2, 2021. However, at Health Canada's further request due to its focus in 2020 on a COVID-19 pandemic response, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine will remain subject to the conditions of sale as outlined in NDS Schedule III until January 2, 2022.*
2. Effective January 2, 2022: NHPs currently listed within Schedule I and II will be removed from the NDS.

As of 2022, all products with a Natural Product Number (NPN) or Drug Identification Number-Homeopathic Medicine (DIN-HM) from Health Canada will be considered outside the scope of NAPRA's National Drug Schedules.



Standards, Guidance, and Competencies



NAPRA establishes model standards, competencies, and guidance documents which can be adopted or adapted for use and implemented by each provincial, territorial, or Canadian Armed Forces pharmacy regulatory body.

Harmonizing competencies and practice standards using common, national documents reinforces their credibility, dependability, and acceptance throughout Canada. This contributes to the delivery of quality care and is critical to help patients receive consistent high-quality care from coast to coast.

In 2019, NAPRA established a cycle to review and update NAPRA documents and resources, began work on *Medication Incident Reporting Standards* and *Model Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians*, and identified its next project to be *Compounding Competencies for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians*.

Action to Help Address the Opioid Crisis

In response to Canada's growing opioid crisis, associations of health professionals, national organizations, regulators, and decision makers were invited to come together at the Opioid Summit held in November 2016. The objective of the summit was to establish a collective response to the opioid crisis and to identify specific actions required to address the crisis in Canada.

This effort resulted in a collective commitment by summit participants to work within their respective areas of responsibility to improve prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and enforcement associated with problematic opioid use through timely, concrete actions that deliver clear results.

As a signatory to the Joint Statement of Action to Address the Opioid Crisis, NAPRA committed to:

1. develop a pharmacist-patient communication tool that would provide guidance to pharmacists on how to have effective conversations with patients regarding opioid use; and
2. compile the extent by which provinces are able to gather and monitor data to contribute to national monitoring and surveillance of opioid use.

NAPRA's first commitment for a communication tool was fulfilled in 2019 with the release of a bilingual *Pharmacist's Virtual Communication Toolkit: Engaging in Effective Conversations About Opioids*. The toolkit is available on NAPRA's website and provides pharmacists with tips and strategies for communicating effectively with patients about opioids, as well as providing links to other useful resources and references.

NAPRA's second commitment to compile the extent by which provinces are able to gather and monitor data was also concluded in 2019 with the submission of a final report to Health Canada's Opioid Response Team and NAPRA's members.



Stakeholder Engagement



On behalf of its members, NAPRA provides leadership on national policy issues, and acts as a national and central point of contact with the federal government and with pan-Canadian as well as international stakeholders.

An important part of its role throughout the year is to contribute to pertinent federal government consultations. In 2019, NAPRA provided input to a great range of federal consultations on key health issues related to the practice and regulation of pharmacy, including, but not limited to, changes to the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, new classes of cannabis and non-prescription cannabis products, drug samples under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, post-consumer returns of drugs, and low dose codeine. NAPRA also participated on Health Canada's Self-Care Framework Task Force, and a working group on matters related to Central Fill establishments. NAPRA also sent letters to the federal leaders on matters critical to patient safety including funding inspections of community pharmacies and the risks to Canadians of the United States exploration of the importation of drugs from Canada.

Coordinating a community of practice for pharmacy regulatory authorities across Canada to address common issues and share knowledge and experiences relevant to pharmacy regulation remains the cornerstone of NAPRA. Inter-jurisdictional discussion among the pharmacy regulatory authorities identifies opportunities for collaboration and provides learnings that contribute to the group's collective mission of pharmacy regulatory excellence from coast to coast.

NAPRA continued to raise awareness of regulatory issues by engaging with stakeholders on matters of mutual interest at the pan-Canadian level as well as internationally. Some of the activities in which NAPRA engaged were: completing an analysis of Canada Health Infoway's PrescribeIT (e-prescribing platform) against NAPRA Pharmacy Practice Management Systems requirements; providing input into the Canadian Association of Mental Health's Opioid Use Disorder National Guidelines; partnering on the *Pharmacy Verified Websites Program* which serves to identify safe and legitimate online pharmacies and online sources of pharmacy information; sharing knowledge with the Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies in Canada regarding the risks to patient safety with online purchasing; and developing and participating in the Forum for Pharmacy Professional Regulators through the Pharmaceutical Federation in Abu Dhabi.

Some of the stakeholders with whom NAPRA engages on behalf of its members include:

Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies

Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada

Canadian Association of Mental Health

Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns

Canadian Association of Pharmacy Technicians

Canadian Council for the Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs

Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators

Canadian Council on Continuing Education in Pharmacy

Canada Health Infoway

Canadian Network for Agencies of Regulation

Canadian Patient Safety Institute

Canadian Pharmacists Association

Canadian Pharmacy Technician Educators Association

Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists

Consumer Health Products Canada

Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation

Federal government departments and agencies

Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada

Health Canada

Health Products Stewardship Association

Institute on Safe Medication Practices

International Pharmaceutical Federation

National Association of Boards of Pharmacy

Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada

Public / Patients

Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada



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