Policy Statement for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians:
Accessing Patient-Specific Information from the Medication Profile Viewer (MPV) Available Under the Pharmaceutical Information Program (PIP)

PREAMBLE

In this policy:

“pharmacist” includes pharmacy proprietor; and,

“privacy legislation” means the Health Information Protection Act (Saskatchewan) and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Canada).

PIP has been developed with the primary purpose of improving patient care in Saskatchewan. Via the MPV, PIP provides Saskatchewan pharmacists and pharmacy technicians access through a secure computer network to information about drugs dispensed to Saskatchewan patients in Saskatchewan pharmacies.

Access to information within PIP is provided to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to assist them to deliver the best possible quality of pharmaceutical care to their patients.

Access, using, or disseminating information from the PIP program, other than as permitted in this policy, is professional or proprietary misconduct.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians:

1. Must be able to justify the reason for accessing information through PIP;

2. Should only access information through PIP when the information that the pharmacist or pharmacy technician expects to obtain may reasonably affect the pharmaceutical care provided to the patient;

3. Should only access the minimum amount of information through PIP that is reasonably required for the purpose for which the information was accessed;

4. Should ensure that only those persons who have a need to know the information should be permitted to access the information;

5. Should only use the information from PIP for the primary purpose of providing pharmaceutical care to their patient, or as is otherwise permitted by privacy legislation or other applicable laws;

6. Should only disclose the information from PIP for the purpose of providing pharmaceutical care to their patient, with the consent of the patient, or as is otherwise permitted by privacy legislation or other applicable laws;
7. Should have appropriate policies and procedures in place to protect the information accessed through PIP from being seen by persons who are not authorized to see that information;

8. Must comply with privacy legislation in connection with the information accessed through PIP; and,

9. Should ensure that persons who the pharmacist or pharmacy technician authorizes to access the information within PIP are aware of and understand their responsibilities.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

1. Pharmacists or pharmacy technicians will not permit any other person under their authority or control (i.e. a pharmacy assistant) to access the information within the PIP database unless the following conditions are met:
   a) That person has been specifically authorized by the pharmacist or pharmacy technician to access the PIP database for a purpose for which the pharmacist or pharmacy technician may access the information; and,
   b) That person has signed a confidentiality agreement in which that person has agreed, among other things, to access the information only on a need-to-know basis, and not to disclose the information to any other person except as permitted by privacy legislation.

2. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must report to the PIP, or such other person or organization as may be specified by the PIP, all activities by any individual or entity that the pharmacist or pharmacy technician suspects may compromise the privacy of the patient or confidentiality of confidential information or be a breach of this policy.

MASKING OPTION

PIP provides an option whereby patients can choose to “mask” their drug profiles. Unless unmasking of the drug profile is authorized as provided below, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are not permitted to access masked drug profiles.

The masking option is administered by Saskatchewan Health or eHealth Saskatchewan. Patients can initiate the masking process by contacting Saskatchewan Health. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians should be able to provide general information about the masking process to patients upon request.

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians may only access a masked drug profile in the following circumstances:

1. Expressed consent of the patient has been obtained;

2. In emergency circumstances where the pharmacist or pharmacy technician believes on reasonable grounds that the use or disclosure will avoid or minimize a danger to the health or safety of any person; or,
3. A prescription being filled is on the list of monitored drugs under the Prescription Review Program (PRP). The list of monitored drugs can be found in Regulatory Bylaw 18.1 of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan.

With respect to the list of monitored (i.e. PRP) drugs, the College is of the view that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians may, upon presentment of a prescription for a PRP drug, access the patient’s masked drug profile given the inherent risk factors and patient safety issues associated with these drugs. Steps will be taken to specifically advise patients of this unmasking requirement at or near the time the patient applies for masking. As such, the patient need not be proactively advised by the pharmacist or pharmacy technician that his/her drug profile is being accessed in these circumstances. However, if inquiries are made the pharmacist or pharmacy technician should be prepared to advise patients of the unmasking requirement for this list of drugs and that the prescription cannot be filled without access to the drug profile.