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## **New regulation to grant prescribing powers to pharmacists**

Edmonton... Starting later this year, pharmacists will be able to more fully use their expertise to serve Albertans by being able to write some prescriptions as a result of a new regulation governing pharmacists.

The Alberta government has approved the Pharmacists Profession Regulation which will allow pharmacists to prescribe some drug treatments, continue prescriptions made by other health practitioners and administer injectable drug treatments, such as vaccines. By permitting pharmacists to prescribe, this regulation will provide better access to drug treatments, particularly more basic prescriptions or in instances where prescriptions need to be extended.

"This is a significant change to our health system that benefits Albertans by providing more options in how they get their prescriptions," said Iris Evans, Minister of Health and Wellness

Pharmacists who wish to be able to prescribe medications will have to complete appropriate training approved by the Alberta College of Pharmacists. Upon completion, pharmacists will be able to prescribe for conditions within limits that will be established by the College. This will help ensure that pharmacists will only prescribe for those conditions that they are competent to assess.

"Expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists is an example of the innovation possible in the health system to enable competently trained health professionals to use all of their education and expertise to benefit Albertans," said Evans. "Having a wider range of health professionals able to provide a health service makes the system more patient-focused and meets the needs and preferences of the individual."

The *Health Professions Act* was initially introduced in 1999. The Act establishes a common framework for governance as well as eliminating some exclusive scopes of practice and introduces the concept of complementary and overlapping areas of practice. The Pharmacists Profession Regulation is the seventeenth addition to the Act. When all of the regulations are approved, the Act will govern 28 regulatory health colleges.

The regulation is expected to come into effect this fall in conjunction with the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*. These pieces of legislation will be proclaimed together to replace the *Pharmaceutical Profession Act* which currently governs both the pharmaceutical profession and the regulation of pharmacies and scheduled drugs.

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