



News Release

New GN Pharmacy Program focused on improved patient care

IQALUIT, Nunavut (July 29, 2011) – Recent changes to Pharmacy Services contracts in Nunavut provide increased interaction with patients ensuring improved service.

“Patient care is a priority for our Department,” said Minister of the Department of Health and Social Services, Tagak Curley. “One way to improve patient care is to increase the interaction between pharmacists and service providers, and pharmacists and patients. And these new service contracts do just that.”

The new contracts have the pharmacist providing the following services in each region:

- drug information to both health care providers and patients
- patient counseling and education
- in-service training for health care professionals
- drug verification and monitoring of patients

In previous contracts pharmacists inventoried, ordered and distributed medications for the regional GN pharmacy at the health centres in Cambridge Bay and Rankin Inlet but did not focus predominantly on patient-centered service. The inventory, ordering and distributing is now done by pharmacy technicians with patient-specific prescriptions being double-checked by a pharmacist for hospitalized patients.

Pharmacy technicians, supported by a contracted telepharmacist at the Ottawa Hospital, provide the same service to Iqaluit and the Baffin Region. Telepharmacy utilizes technology to deliver pharmacy services remotely and allows pharmacists to connect directly to the ‘pharmacy program’ to check and monitor hospitalized patient medications. This leads to improved patient health care outcomes and medication safety.

“We are looking for excellence in pharmacy services and to achieve industry and Accreditation Canada standards across the territory,” said Territorial Director of Pharmacy, Dr. Alana Froese. “In order to meet these goals we are committed to maintaining contracts to deliver on-site pharmacist services in Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay.”

The Department of Health and Social Services will also be collaborating with retail pharmacy providers to explore retail telepharmacy models for Nunavut – enabling retail pharmacy providers to provide ‘closer-to-home’ services in remote communities. This could mean that patients in remote communities, that don’t have a local pharmacy, would not have to wait for their prescription to arrive by airplane from a regional centre – once again, improving service to the patient.

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