

# Enabling Pharmacist Prescribing: Lessons Learned in Nova Scotia

A multi-year collaboration studied the experiences of community pharmacists prescribing in Nova Scotia. Despite pharmacist prescribing becoming more common, community pharmacists reported several things that hinder their practice (barriers). They also reported things that help support pharmacist prescribing (facilitators). An [analysis of these barriers and facilitators](#) suggests that there are many ways that different groups can work together to support pharmacist prescribing. This summary focuses on specific things that can be done to support pharmacist prescribing practices.

## How can we work together to support pharmacist prescribing?



# Change Strategies to Support Pharmacist Prescribing

These recommendations were identified as important ways to enhance facilitators and reduce barriers to pharmacist prescribing.



## Pharmacists can:

- Reflect on prescribing activities and use available practice supports to build competencies and confidence (e.g. decision aids, continuing education, peer support)
- Mentor colleagues by discussing prescribing questions and practices
- Talk with peers about any fears or concerns about prescribing
- Advocate for a practice environment that supports prescribing (e.g. encouraging appointments)



## Pharmacy Owners/Managers can:

- Create an organizational culture of clinical care
  - Offer pharmacists peer mentorship and training to build their skills
  - Encourage conversations with the public to promote prescribing
- Provide an environment that supports pharmacist prescribing
  - Have practice supports (e.g. decision aids)
  - Use workflow strategies (e.g. appointment-based care, focused time on clinical care)
  - Have a private space to provide clinical care
- Ensure appropriate staffing to provide clinical care



## Educators can:

- Provide opportunities to practice clinical reasoning skills, build competencies, and gain confidence in clinical decision-making, e.g.:
  - Using “think aloud” activities
  - Applying decision aids
  - Dealing with uncertainty
  - Weighing benefits and risks of prescribing from the perspective of patients and the healthcare system
- Incorporate opportunities to practice complete and efficient documentation



## Advocacy Bodies can:

- Support implementation in practice through educational opportunities, decision aids, and workflow strategies
- Educate the public about what pharmacists can prescribe and how to appropriately access this care
- Create communities of practice so pharmacists can learn from each other



## Regulators can:

- Educate the public on what quality pharmacy care looks like and how to access it
- Promote the importance of prescribing and the harms associated with not providing care
- Establish standards of practice that set clear expectations for prescribing
- Enable pharmacist scope of practice to order and interpret laboratory tests



## Governments can:

- Fund pharmacist prescribing as part of the publicly-funded health system
- Provide pharmacists with access to patient records needed to inform clinical decision-making
- Authorize pharmacists to use provincial systems for ordering and receiving laboratory tests

To learn more about the evidence for these recommendations, see:

Grant A, Kennie-Kaulbach N, Bishop A, Isenor JE. Enabling pharmacist prescribing: Lessons learned in Nova Scotia using behaviour change theory. *Canadian Pharmacists Journal / Revue des Pharmaciens du Canada*. 2024;0(0).

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