



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Regulatory changes coming for Pharmacy Technicians

Pharmacy Technicians will become regulated in the new year, but health authorities will not require all existing Pharmacy Technicians to become regulated, according to information given to the HEU.

Members who do not become regulated will receive a new job title.

The union met with Health Employers Association of BC and pharmacy representatives from the health authorities to let them know of the union's concerns and to discuss how we can move forward cooperatively to respond to these changes brought about by the College of Pharmacists and approved by the Ministry of Health Services.

At this time there are still many unknowns about the impact of this new regulatory change, and this is creating anxiety for many Pharmacy Technicians.

Members want job security and are concerned about potential changes to their job title or responsibilities. Some members see this regulatory change as an opportunity for potential career development and want professional support, since becoming regulated involves completing a bridging program.

Protected "Pharmacy Technician" job title

On July 31, 2010, the Minister of Health Services approved the College of Pharmacists' new bylaws enabling it to regulate Pharmacy Technicians. The job title "Pharmacy Technician" will become a protected title for use only by regulated Pharmacy Technicians on January 1, 2011. The title for non-regulated Pharmacy Technicians has not been determined.

Pharmacy Technicians who become regulated will have different responsibilities, most notably that of working independently in certain circumstances, with less supervision from a Pharmacist.

Employers will not be forced by this regulatory change to use only regulated Pharmacy Technicians. It is more likely that they will use a mix of regulated and non-regulated staff.

What that mix will look like is still unknown. Health authorities' pharmacy directors and a working group that includes Pharmacy Technicians are still in the process of making these

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decisions. HEU is working with the pharmacy directors to make this information available as soon as possible, since potential new Pharmacy Technicians will graduate from the new program as early as the end of this month.

But right now there is no firm plan or schedule to implement changes in the near future. And there is no set date by which members can expect to see new postings for regulated Pharmacy Technicians.

What is clear is that there will not be a standard province-wide restructuring. Employers will develop their own utilization plans.

Health employers will also be providing liability insurance for members working as regulated Pharmacy Technicians, just as they do for pharmacists.

A discussion between the HEU and the employers on creating a new benchmark will be initiated once a joint committee has been struck to work on this task.

Bridging program

The College is developing the bridging program for working Pharmacy Technicians to become regulated. The program should have all of its modules available to members by early 2011, and will be in place until 2015.

This means members interested in the bridging program have a five-year window to plan and schedule their modules and exams. There is currently no agreement on whether the health authorities will provide any financial support to members wishing to pursue the bridging program.

The union and health employers will continue to discuss what supports may be available for current staff. And HEU will continue to work with the College to provide more detailed information to members regarding the exams, bridging modules, and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

Information about the new scope of practice, the regulation process, and bridging opportunities are available at the College's webpage <<http://tinyurl.com/CPBCptr>>.

The union will continue to work with HEABC and the health authorities to ensure member concerns are taken into account in any workplace changes resulting from this regulatory change. Updates will be provided to members as details become available.

If you have any questions, please contact your servicing representative or Stephen Elliott-Buckley in the HEU research department at 604-456-7040 or 1-800-663-5813.

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