

Ontario Guidelines for Provision of Plan B (Schedule II)

Pharmacists are health care professionals whose practice is guided by the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice established by their regulatory body, the Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP). Pharmacists practice in accordance with all applicable legislation and regulations including Ontario's privacy legislation, the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* (PHIPA). These guidelines are the result of the joint efforts of the OCP, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (IPC) and the Ontario Pharmacists' Association (OPA). These guidelines follow the issuance of OCP's December 8, 2005 notice which advised pharmacists not to use the "Screening Form for Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs)," developed by the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA).

As there are already educational resources available to pharmacists for Plan B, these guidelines will not duplicate those efforts, but will outline the appropriate application of OCP's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics and PHIPA in the context of providing Plan B.

The IPC recognizes the important health care services pharmacists provide. The IPC's mandate is to ensure that personal health information is collected, used and disclosed in the most privacy protective manner possible. Specifically, under PHIPA, health information custodians shall not collect, use or disclose personal health information if other information will serve the purpose. Moreover, PHIPA restricts the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information to that which is reasonably necessary to meet the purpose of providing health care. OCP's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice provide the framework for pharmacists' practice. Many components of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice protect patient privacy and reinforce the Ontario health privacy legislation, PHIPA.

For the provision of Plan B, as with any other Schedule II product, the pharmacist must always be involved in the decision to provide the medication. As with other medications, prior to its sale, the pharmacist has a professional responsibility to be assured of the appropriateness of the drug for the individual.

Pharmacists should continue to seek information from the patient only as necessary to clarify the appropriateness of providing Plan B, keeping in mind the need to respect the individual's right to remain anonymous and to decline responding to personally sensitive questions. As with all Schedule II products, if a pharmacist makes a decision not to sell Plan B, reasons should be communicated to the patient.

Pharmacists do not routinely collect personally identifiable information as it relates to the provision of Schedule II products. In the case of Plan B, personally identifiable information should not be recorded except when requested by the patient for reimbursement purposes or in those rare instances where it is deemed important for continuity of care of the patient.

Additional resources and information on PHIPA can be found under:

www.ipc.on.ca
www.opatoday.com
www.ocpinfo.com

or by contacting the IPC at 416-326-3333 or 1-800-387-0073.