

# Our Support and Feedback for Expanding Pharmacists' Scope of Practice

In the past decade we've seen the crucial role pharmacists can play in delivering health care. Most notably, in supporting uptake of vaccines in community pharmacies and easing the stressors on patients faced in hospitals, primary care offices, and other practice settings. Pharmacy role-expansion is a win-win for patients and the health care system, especially with most Canadians preferring to get their vaccines from their local pharmacy, and 95% of Canadians living within five kilometers of a pharmacy.<sup>1,2</sup> This is particularly beneficial for the approximately 10% of Ontarians who currently do not have access to a primary care doctor. Pharmacists provide the *right care* in *convenient locations*, making it *faster* and easier for patients to get what they need.

Continuing to find ways to optimize the ability of Ontario pharmacists to apply their expertise and skills is a strategic, wise, and economically sound move, and GSK is encouraged by these proposed changes in this challenging health care environment. GSK fully supports the proposed scope expansion outlined on [September 17, 2025](#) by the government, and are delighted to share our feedback, primarily on those changes that enable increased access to vaccines.

## Expanding pharmacists' scope of practice is an important step toward capturing the full value of public investment in vaccines

With respect to the Scope of Practice Expansions, GSK fully supports the proposed changes to pharmacist prescribing for additional minor ailments, communicating a diagnosis for specific minor ailments, and addressing barriers pharmacists face in hospital settings.

In short, the proposed changes to give pharmacists access to administer the publicly funded adult vaccine programs and prescribing authority for more minor ailments enables pharmacists to leverage their expertise with broad system impact, reducing pressure on primary care and emergency departments.

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<sup>1</sup> CPhA. Vaccine intentions among Canadians. August 2023. <https://www.pharmacists.ca/cpha-ca/assets/File/cpha-on-the-issues/CPhA-Cold-and-flu-season-survey-Aug2023-Release-deck.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Pharmacists Association. 10 Years of Immunizations. <https://opatoday.com/10yearsofimmunizations/>

That said, these regulations stop short of eliminating barriers to access for vaccines in pharmacy. For example, patients seeking a Shingrix vaccine at their local pharmacy outside of the publicly-funded 65-70 age cohort may still require a physician prescription to be reimbursed by their private insurer. This is not only logistically challenging to make a timely appointment to get the prescription, but may be hindering uptake through mere frustration and challenges with access to primary care providers

Although this consultation does not include scope of practice changes to enable pharmacists to prescribe vaccines, we believe this is an important step in improving patient access, and GSK will continue to advocate to the Ontario government for this next logical step.

### **Allowing pharmacy technicians to administer additional Schedule 3 Vaccines**

We are fully supportive of the expanded list of Schedule 3 vaccines that **pharmacy technicians** in Ontario may soon be able to administer. For years, we've dedicated our efforts to streamlining the patient experience, making it easier for individuals to access vaccines by advocating for public coverage and programs at their local pharmacies. This expansion is a positive step forward for our mission – and we believe the mission of Ontario – to enhance patient outcomes, prevent infectious diseases, and bolster public health.

GSK will continue to advocate for policy change and program expansion that enables more Canadians to access preventative care quickly and conveniently. We are fully aligned with the Government of Ontario's mandate to Provide Patients with The Right Care at The Right Place and Making it Faster and Easier to Access Care, and we look forward to ongoing collaboration with the Government, OCP, and others to create a healthier future for all.