

Backgrounder

- In 2016, the College established a Medication Safety Task Force to review options to proceed with a medication incident reporting program in the province. The task force included Melissa Sheldrick, a patient safety advocate and the mother of Andrew Sheldrick who died tragically due to a medication error.
- In 2017, Council approved the Task Force's recommendation to develop and implement a mandatory standardized medication safety, quality assurance and anonymous incident reporting program for all pharmacies. The College developed the components of the program and Pharmapod Ltd. was selected to develop and implement a medication event recording platform for pharmacies.
- In February 2018, implementation of the program – formally named the Assurance and Improvement in Medication Safety (AIMS) Program – began with a preliminary phase involving 100 community pharmacies, who tested and provided feedback on the program.
- In November 2018, full province-wide implementation of the AIMS program began with the onboarding of the remaining community pharmacies.
- With the ultimate goal of reducing the risk of patient harm caused by medication incidents involving pharmacies, the program focuses on four key mandatory components: anonymous reporting of medication incidents and near misses; effective documentation; analysis of the incidents; and quality improvement. It's rooted in the principles of a safety culture, very similar to what exists in other parts of the health system.
- AIMS builds on the College's existing expectation that pharmacies and pharmacy professionals are engaging in safe medication practices and continuous quality improvement, [illustrated](#) in the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities' Standards of Practice, the College's supplemental Standards of Practice and Standards of Operation, the pharmacy assessment process and policies for pharmacy professionals. This includes a requirement to report medication errors internally within their organizations.
- As of August 2019, 85% of Ontario's 4,500-plus community pharmacies have been onboarded. All remaining community pharmacies are expected to be onboarded by fall 2019, making it the largest program of its kind in Canada.
- Hospital pharmacies, which already have medication safety and quality improvement mechanisms in place, will be onboarded to the program at a later date.
- Other regulators, including Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick, have or are in the process of implementing similar medication safety programs, which advance national and worldwide efforts to reduce medication incidents. In 2017, the World Health Organization launched a global initiative to reduce severe, avoidable medication-associated harm in all countries by 50% over the next five years.

For additional information about the AIMS Program, please consult our website:

<https://www.ocpinfo.com/regulations-standards/aims-assurance-and-improvement-in-medication-safety/>