



Council Policy

Record Retention: Electronic Storage of Prescriptions

February 2016

Introduction

The Food and Drug Regulations section C.01.041.1 requires that written prescriptions, or written records of verbal prescriptions, be retained for at least two years after the day they were filled. In July 2014, Health Canada advised that their interpretation of the term “written” includes:

- 1) The original written prescription, or
- 2) The electronically-scanned copy of the original prescription

Health Canada further clarified in their communication that if an original prescription is scanned into a secure electronic database, the legal requirement to store a “written prescription” is considered met and there is no need to retain the original hand-written/printed prescription.

Policy

- This policy applies to the storage and retention of patient records in a retail pharmacy. The storage and retention of records in a hospital or provincial pharmacy is governed by Health PEI policies.
- A Record is a complete reference of all documentation related to the care of a patient. This may include but is not limited to records relating to prescriptions, medication reviews, patient counselling, drug administration, opioid dosing logs etc.
- If an original written/paper prescription or record is scanned into a secure electronic database the requirement to store the written/paper prescription or record is considered met. There is no need to keep the original written/paper prescription or record. Provincial regulations require that patient prescriptions and records be maintained for a minimum of 10 years (after the last date contact or dispense for prescriptions).
- Hardcopies of prescription refills, which are part of the patient record, need to be maintained as the pharmacist or pharmacy technician is required to sign the



prescription hardcopy to confirm a verification of the prescription has taken place. The hardcopies can be scanned into a secure electronic database and destroyed thereafter.

- Electronic signatures of pharmacists or technicians must be individual, intentional, secure and not reproducible. Pharmacies, that use pharmacy management systems which allow pharmacists and technicians to sign electronically, are not required to print a hardcopy of a prescription for signing.
- Pharmacy managers must ensure that a quality assurance process is in place that assures that the scanning and workflow process of the pharmacy achieves compliance with the Food and Drug Regulations as well as the Pharmacy Act Regulations and this policy.