

Provincial Policy and Programs  
300 Carlton Street  
Winnipeg MB R3B 3M9

June 2014

Dear Pharmacist:

In May 2012, changes to Manitoba's *Prescription Drugs Cost Assistance Act* were proclaimed to strengthen monitoring and improve prescribing and dispensing practices for narcotics and controlled drugs, sedative/hypnotics and other drugs selected for monitoring.

The changes included:

- establishing a new category of drugs, called monitored drugs, to increase the monitoring of the prescribing, dispensing and use of specific drugs listed in the legislation;
- allowing regulatory bodies, such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba and the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba, to work with Manitoba Health to monitor prescribing and dispensing practices;
- establishing an advisory committee of experts, the Manitoba Monitored Drugs Review Committee (MMDRC), to identify patterns or trends that might indicate inappropriate prescribing, dispensing, abuse or misuse of monitored drugs and make recommendations to the Minister of Health in order to optimize patient care.

The MMDRC, established last year, is an interdisciplinary advisory committee consisting of representatives from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba, Doctors Manitoba and Manitoba Health. Members of the MMDRC also represent a range of expertise including acute and/or outpatient care, family practice and addictions management.

The MMDRC will be reviewing the prescribing, dispensing and use of opiates and other monitored drugs over the next few years and collaborating with a variety of stakeholders. The Committee will be developing and/or selecting parameters for data analysis in order to evaluate prescribing, dispensing and utilization trends. As a part of this review process, you may be receiving letters regarding your practice.

You will be receiving more information from the MMDRC regarding the first focus area which is the prescribing and dispensing of opioids and/or benzodiazepines and monitoring of patients on opioids and/or benzodiazepines in the future.

Sincerely,



Bernadette Preun  
Chair, MMDRC