



ONTARIO  
PHARMACISTS  
ASSOCIATION

Advocating Excellence  
in Practice and Care

JANUARY 2019

# **ADVOCACY IN ACTION**

**STUDENT GUIDE**



# ***STEP 1: Positive Patient Interactions***

Whether working at your rotation or part-time job, every patient interaction is an opportunity to communicate the value of pharmacy.

Most of the time, patients may not fully understand the work done behind the counter to ensure their safety, and may often attribute our work to simply “counting pills”.

As pharmacy students, we can impact perceptions of pharmacy by actively communicating with patients at the grassroots level.

## **THREE WAYS STUDENTS CAN ADVOCATE FOR PHARMACY, ONE PATIENT AT A TIME.**

### ***1. At prescription intake***

#### **ASK ABOUT THEIR CONCERN.**

Often when we receive a prescription, the indication is not explicitly stated. Instead of waiting until pick-up to ask what the medication is prescribed for, start your prescription assessment at the intake station. Here you can catch drug therapy problems (DTPs) earlier in the process.

By doing so, you can reveal your clinical knowledge and thought processes directly with the patient. It also gives the patient a chance to voice their concerns, helping you build a trusting patient-provider relationship.

### ***2. When communicating the wait time***

#### **SHARE WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO.**

We often use a simple phrase – “It will be ready in 15 minutes” – when communicating the wait time for prescriptions. Take a moment to breakdown this often-used phrase to be more descriptive.

For example: “The pharmacist will verify your prescription to ensure that it is safe and appropriate for you. This will take 15 minutes due to prescriptions in line to be prepared before yours.”

Be aware that patients often arrive at the pharmacy after visiting the doctor and may be tired or uncomfortable. They are understandably in a hurry – taking the time to explain your process will help them appreciate why they must wait.

### ***3. At the pick-up counter***

#### **ASK ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS AND ADHERENCE.**

Pharmacists are the most accessible healthcare provider, but we may not always take advantage of this. When a patient comes in for a refill, instead of asking “Have you taken this before?”, we can go one step further and ask if they have any problems taking their medications, or if they have any concerns or questions. If you notice that a patient is refilling their prescriptions late, try and discover the reason behind it.

This is a great opportunity to catch DTPs which can be communicated to the prescriber and billed for through the Pharmaceutical Opinion program.

# Pharmacy Student Scope of Practice in Ontario



Scope of Practice for Registered Pharmacy Students in Ontario

- Provide information and educate patients
- Dispense, sell and compound drugs
- Accept verbal prescriptions
- Authorize prescription transfers
- Prescribe specific drug products for smoking cessation
- Renew or adapt prescriptions
- Perform a procedure on tissue below the dermis (piercing with a lancet-type device)
- Administer a substance\* by injection or inhalation for the purpose of education and demonstration
- Administer an authorized vaccine\* to patients (five years or older)

\* As specified in the Pharmacy Act Regulation and with approved training only

Note: Registered pharmacy students may only perform the above acts under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist.

## Publicly Funded Pharmacy Services in Ontario



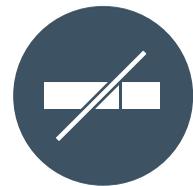
Medication Reviews (i.e., MedsCheck)



Pharmaceutical Opinion Program



Immunizations



Smoking Cessation Services

# Pharmacy Scope of Practice Across Canada

Scope of Practice <sup>1</sup>		Province/Territory													
		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	NWT	YT	NU	
<b>Prescriptive Authority (Schedule 1 Drugs)<sup>1</sup></b>	Independently, for any Schedule 1 drug	X	✓ <sup>5</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	In a collaborative practice setting/ agreement	X	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	
	Initiate <sup>2</sup>	For minor ailments/ conditions	X	✓	✓	✓ <sup>5</sup>	X	✓	✓	✓	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓	X	X	X
		For smoking/tobacco cessation	X	✓	P	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓	X	X	X
	In an emergency	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	
<b>Adapt<sup>3</sup>/ Manage</b>	Independently, for any Schedule 1 drug <sup>4</sup>	X	✓ <sup>5</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Independently, in a collaborative practice <sup>4</sup>	X	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	
	Make therapeutic substitution	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	
	Change drug dosage, formulation, regimen, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	
	Renew/extend prescription for continuity of care	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	
<b>Injection Authority (SC or IM)<sup>1,5</sup></b>	Any drug or vaccine	X	✓	✓	✓	X <sup>7</sup>	X <sup>7</sup>	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	
	Vaccines <sup>6</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	
	Travel vaccines <sup>6</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	
	Influenza vaccine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	
<b>Labs</b>	Order and interpret lab tests	X	✓	P <sup>8</sup>	✓ <sup>9</sup>	X	✓	P	P <sup>8</sup>	P	X	X	X	X	
<b>Techs</b>	Regulated pharmacy technicians	✓	✓	✓	✓ <sup>10</sup>	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	

- Scope of activities, regulations, training requirements and/or limitations differ between jurisdictions. Please refer to the pharmacy regulatory authorities for details.
- Initiate new prescription drug therapy, not including drugs covered under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.
- Alter another prescriber's original/existing/current prescription for drug therapy.
- Pharmacists independently manage Schedule 1 drug therapy under their own authority, unrestricted by existing/initial prescription(s), drug type, condition, etc.
- Applies only to pharmacists with additional training, certification and/or authorisation through their regulatory authority.
- Authority to inject may not be inclusive of all vaccines in this category. Please refer to the jurisdictional regulations.
- For education/demonstration purposes only.
- Ordering by community pharmacists pending health system regulations for pharmacist requisitions to labs.
- Authority is limited to ordering lab tests.
- Pharmacy technician registration available through the regulatory authority (no official licensing).

 Implemented in jurisdiction
  Pending legislation, regulation or policy for implementation
  Not implemented

\* Information provided by the Canadian Pharmacists Association ([www.pharmacists.ca](http://www.pharmacists.ca))

# Where Can Pharmacy Students Make a Difference?

## Tips to answering commonly asked patient questions

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### *“I don’t feel like this blood pressure medication does anything!”*

Patients may stop taking medications for chronic diseases such as hypertension and dyslipidemia because they don’t see a benefit:

- Pharmacy students are in an ideal position to explain the long-term benefits of medications for diseases that may not have a physical manifestation.

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### *“I don’t think I will be needing this medication after all.”*

Assess barriers such as dosage form or cost that might prevent the patient from taking their medications as prescribed:

- Investigate the Trillium Program or the Exceptional Access Program as avenues to get medications covered.
- Offer liquid formulations and easy-open caps.

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### *“How can I remember to take all of these medications?”*

Blister packs aren’t always right for the patient. Some patients don’t know the purpose of the blister pack and end up taking the entire day’s medications at once. We can be creative in the solutions we suggest to patients to manage their medications:

- “Put it beside your bed if it’s something you take at night”
- “Put it on the kitchen table if you have to take it with meals”
- “Have an extra inhaler in your purse/backpack/car in case of emergencies”

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### *“Do I have to go to the doctor for this?”*

Pharmacists can help reduce wait times and create capacity in our healthcare system by assessing and recommending over-the-counter (OTC) therapies for common minor ailments:

- E.g., Pink eye, athlete’s foot, dermatitis, GERD...

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### *“What else can I do about my diabetes? or asthma? or COPD?”*

Pharmacists can help monitor and manage a patient’s chronic disease through patient education:

- Diabetes: encourage an annual Diabetes MedsCheck and follow up appointments
- COPD, asthma, hypertension, hyperlipidemia - education and management
- Encourage a healthy diet, exercise and smoking cessation

# Where Can Pharmacy Students Make a Difference? (cont'd)

## Tips to answering commonly asked patient questions

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### *"I want to learn more about quitting smoking."*

Use this aspect of our scope and let your patients know what you can do for them:

- Provide patients with the resources they need to make an informed decision
- Don't push patients who aren't ready to quit as you may negatively impact your relationship with them.
- Support them until they are ready to quit, be ready to act when they are ready:
  - Motivational interviewing to help the patient recognize and be encouraged by their strengths and personal incentives
  - Pharmacists can prescribe bupropion and varenicline for smoking cessation
  - Recommend OTC products (nicotine patches, gums, inhalers, mouth sprays, lozenges)
  - Direct them to [LeaveThePackBehind.com](http://LeaveThePackBehind.com) for the opportunity to get free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) patches/gum and participate in challenges

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### *"I am going on vacation soon."*

Help ensure that patients have enough medication for the duration of their trip and take this opportunity to ask if they've had their travel vaccinations:

- Hep A/B, Typhoid, Meningococcal, Cholera...etc.
- Offer travel vaccination services by the pharmacist
- Recommend common OTCs such as loperamide, dimenhydrinate and acetaminophen.

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### *"My grandmother got the flu last year, so I am bringing her in today for a flu shot!"*

Encourage all patients to get the flu shot:

- Explain the concept of herd immunity, as many patients decline the flu shot because they don't think they'll personally get the flu.
- Speak to patients about the benefits of getting the flu shot yearly, especially those who live with a young, elderly or immunocompromised family member.

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### *an opioid, should I carry a naloxone kit?"*

- Take the opportunity and recognize patients who are on chronic opioids to educate and provide training on a naloxone kit
- Pharmacists can play a key role in a patient's opioid management through counselling and education to mitigate addiction and adverse effects of opioids
- Take the time to counsel patients on how to use a naloxone kit effectively

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### *"How do I get help?"*

Become familiar with community supports in your area, especially for mental health. Have a list of services available to refer patients to. A great starting point is the nearest branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association ([www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)).

## **Advocacy Continued...**

# **STEP 2: Meet with Your MPP**

### **INTRODUCTION TO GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

Government Relations (GR) is the process of influencing public and government policy at all levels: locally, provincially or nationally. A large part of pharmacy advocacy is about providing government officials with the right information for them to make the best possible decision.

The Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) meets regularly with government officials to discuss and encourage change regarding Ontario's healthcare system and pharmacy practice related concerns. Some examples of changes brought about in pharmacy practice through OPA's advocacy work include:

- allowing pharmacists to renew and adapt prescriptions;
- the ability to prescribe drugs for smoking cessation; and
- administering vaccines.

It's important to meet with government officials, both elected and non-elected, because they care about what is happening in their communities. Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) rely on advocacy groups, media, public research and polls to keep them informed on the issues that are important in their constituencies and to their constituents. Establishing good relations with MPPs can help to influence legislation and priorities by putting a local face on a national or provincial issue.

### **AS WITH ANY GOOD RELATIONSHIP, EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS DEPEND ON:**

- 1. Regular communication**
- 2. Trust**
- 3. Mutual respect**
- 4. Voter interest**
- 5. Timeliness**

If you are interested in contacting your local MPP to discuss key issues facing pharmacy practice, contact your OPA student representative for support and resources to ensure a successful meeting.

# MPP Outreach and Key Messages

Pharmacy professionals are highly trained and skilled, and have more to offer patients than they are currently providing. We can deliver more accessible care and alleviate many of the issues that we see today in our healthcare system. Our services can be applied to three key areas: public health, primary care and medication management. To enable these services, we are asking the government for the following:

## KEY MESSAGES

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- 1** Enable pharmacy professionals to expand their scope of practice and deliver a broader set of funded services to patients, alleviating pressure on the rest of the healthcare system.
- 2** Invest in pharmacy and transition to a new funding model – one that supports a service-based approach in pharmacy and allows pharmacy professionals to serve the needs of their patients according to their full set of skills.
- 3** Pro-actively engage with pharmacy professionals and include their expertise and perspective on healthcare matters.

## SPEAKING POINTS

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### Introduction and Background

- I want to talk to you today about the greater role that pharmacists and pharmacies can play in delivering better healthcare to the people of Ontario
- There are 4,547 pharmacies (4,327 community and 220 hospital) in every corner of Ontario and they are the most accessible and convenient healthcare provider for patients.
- Within those community pharmacies, there are more than 16,000 pharmacists and 4,600 pharmacy technicians registered to practise in Ontario.
- Pharmacists are highly trained and skilled; today's pharmacists are graduating with a doctorate-level PharmD degree and have more to offer patients than the care they are currently providing.

Specifically, I would like to talk to you about how pharmacists can deliver more accessible care for patients in three main areas: Public Health, Primary Care, and Medication Management

### **1 Public Health:**

- a. Pharmacists can play a key role in preventing addictions to opioids through pain management services. OPA has a proposal to the Ministry to offer meaningful counselling services to new opioid users, mitigating the risk of addiction. It would also allow us to reduce opioid dosages and switch patients to less addictive alternatives, when appropriate.
- b. Pharmacists already provide publicly funded flu shots. However, we should be able to administer all other publicly funded vaccines such as shingles and HPV.
- c. Pharmacists are already funded to provide smoking cessation counselling and supports to patients on Ontario Drug Benefit and OHIP+. This service should be expanded to all Ontarians as recommended by the Ministry's Executive Steering Committee for the Modernization of Smoke-Free Ontario.

# **MPP Outreach and Key Messages (cont'd)**

## **2 Primary Care:**

- a. Pharmacy professionals can reduce wait times and create capacity in physician and nurse practitioner offices, and reduce emergency and specialist wait times by assessing and prescribing for common minor ailments, such as pink eye, urinary tract infections, athlete's foot and other self-limiting conditions.
- b. Pharmacies should be more involved in the management of chronic diseases. Pharmacists should be able to order laboratory tests and provide point of care testing to ensure patients are managing their chronic diseases effectively.

## **3 Medication Management:**

- a. Pharmacists should be able to dispense medicinal cannabis to patients to ensure proper medication management and no contra-indications with existing medication. We need the Ontario government to tell the federal government that in this province, medicinal cannabis should be dispensed in pharmacies.
- b. Programs like MedsCheck, where a pharmacist can take the time to properly counsel patients on their medications, should be maintained and expanded into other chronic diseases and pain management.
- c. Pharmacists should have access to new technologies that are providing more opportunities to help ensure appropriateness and adherence. For example, there are DNA tests that can help determine if a drug will be effective. Eliminating ineffective prescriptions would also help the government manage its drug budget.
- d. Let's work together to implement free prescriptions for seniors as quickly as possible (earlier than August 2019) so that seniors can begin to choose their pharmacy needs based on quality of care rather than price, and live healthier lives.

## **CONCLUSION**

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- All of these are areas where the expertise of pharmacy professionals can be leveraged to help patients and play a greater role in their healthcare.
- Some of these changes would require legislative or regulatory changes and new funding.
- We believe patients, pharmacists and government would benefit from a new pharmacy model that would allow all of these services to be available, regulated and funded.
- We need to move away from the current transactional distribution of medication model to one based on healthcare services to the patient.
- OPA is ready to work with you and the government. For this, we seek your support.

# How to Find and Schedule a Meeting with your Representative

## Step 1: Identify your MPP

### Find out who your local MPP is:

- If you are unsure of your constituency, visit:  
<https://voterinformationservice.elections.on.ca/en/election/search>
- Enter your postal code

**Tip:** Plan to contact the MPP in both the constituency in which you reside and where your pharmacy is located

### Let us know who you are reaching out to:

- Confirm with OPA that you have scheduled your meeting. Please notify Corinne Radake at [cradake@opatoday.com](mailto:cradake@opatoday.com) or 647-237-6543.

### Once you have identified your local MPP, learn about their background online:

- See if they have a health background or have any specific interests in a particular health issue

## Step 2: Contact the Constituency Office

Phone your local MPP constituency office to request a meeting

- MPP offices are staffed with constituency assistants who manage the MPP's schedule and answer requests from constituents – this individual will coordinate the meeting
- Be prepared to verbally communicate your request for a meeting with high level information about who you are and what you would like to discuss
- Ask the name of the constituency assistant you are speaking with and ask for their email so that you can follow up via email (some may direct you to the constituency email)
- Note that each MPP may have a slightly different protocol before accepting meetings

**Tip:** Speak to an actual person, do not leave a voicemail

## Step 3: Send an Email Request

After you speak to the constituency assistant, they will often ask you to send a follow up email. Follow up as soon as possible after your conversation to stay top of mind.

### Sample email request:

Dear [MPP, Assistant name]

I am writing to follow up on my conversation with [name] in your office to arrange for a meeting in the coming weeks. As I indicated, I am a pharmacist/pharmacy technician/pharmacy student in [community] and would like to meet with you as my MPP to discuss key issues that are facing the pharmacy profession today.

I look forward to hearing back from your office to set a date and time. In the meantime, if you require any more information, I can be reached by email or by phone at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Name

If your request for a meeting is denied, ask if there are any other dates available, or how best to contact the MPP to express your concerns. Underline the importance of the issues to you, your patients, your employees and the community.

# How to Find and Schedule a Meeting with your Representative (cont'd)

## **Step 4: Follow up Until a Meeting is Secured**

MPPs receive many meeting requests so it can often take days or even weeks to confirm a meeting date:

- It's important to follow up on your email request – be patient but persistent
- If you don't get a response within one week (five business days), then it is appropriate to follow up with a second email request
- Continue each week until a date is provided

### **Sample follow up email**

Greetings,

I would like to follow up on my request sent on [date] for a meeting with MPP [name].

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet and look forward to hearing back from your office at the earliest opportunity. I can be reached at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Name

## **Step 5: Once Meeting is Confirmed**

When you receive a proposed date and time for the meeting, respond with a confirmation email to the office. This will ensure confirmation of the meeting details.

The email should include:

- The names of the others attending the meeting with you, if applicable
- Your mobile phone number for any last minute scheduling changes

# Tips for a Good Meeting

## Be Prepared

Review your briefing package and background information

- This includes the material and MPP background search

Prepare some contextual information about the care that you provide in your pharmacy such as:

- Your role at the pharmacy (employee/owner)
- How many patients you interact with (daily/monthly/yearly)
- The services you provide to patients (influenza immunizations, care planning, medication dispensing, etc.)
- Sample stories, respecting personal information, of how your services make an impact on a local constituent or the local community

Understand your talking points and be clear about what you are asking for

- The MPP's job is to meet with constituents and stakeholders – all of whom demand time and attention. It is normal for an elected official to “cut to the chase” and ask what you want from him/her
- Be ready for the question and answer it clearly and concisely

Prepare for a conversation, not a presentation

- The best meetings are ones that allow for two-way dialogue

Handouts

- Ensure you have copies of “leave behind” tactics included in this package, such as:



Fact sheets on key priorities of OPA



Pharmacy in Ontario statistics



Promotional products to keep pharmacy top of mind

*\* Speak to your student representative for copies.*

## Know What to Expect

MPPs come from a variety of professions and backgrounds:

- MPPs each have their own experiences that they will draw from
- Most are adept at handling meetings but others are still new to their roles

# **Tips for a Good Meeting (cont'd)**

## **What do I Say to My MPP?**

- Introduce yourself and your pharmacy – make it as personal as possible
- This is often where a personal connection will be made between yourself and the MPP, who may share their own experience with a pharmacy
- Explain the issues you wish to discuss
- Use personal stories or examples
- Localize your issues to the community they represent
- Talk about solutions that are feasible
- Offer to follow-up and keep in touch
- Be sincere and passionate without being emotional or antagonistic
- Make the ask: if you have recommendations, be sure to clearly state them

## **Your MPP Wants:**

- To be well informed about issues and events of local importance
- For you to be a reliable contact for information
- To be acknowledged for positive political action

## **Remember:**

- Be on time for the meeting. Don't take more time for the meeting unless it is made available.
- Answer questions honestly. If you don't have an answer, offer to get back to them or the assistant with the information.
- Be a good listener.
- Plan a condensed version of your presentation in case the meeting time is shortened. Be flexible. Be prepared.
- Meetings can sometimes take an unexpected direction. Sometimes a member will start the discussion by sharing his/her own experience with pharmacy. While it's always nice to hear positive experience, some MPPs may share a bad experience that does not reflect the quality care that you deliver to your patients.
- Don't get defensive. Acknowledge the experience, and use it as an opportunity to explain what should have happened or what could have contributed to that negative experience.
- Other times, MPPs will choose to focus on a specific issue that they are passionate about. Do the best that you can to pivot the conversation back to your messages, however, in some cases, it may be best to let the MPPs lead the conversation and try to answer any questions that they might have from a pharmacist perspective. This may help build a longer lasting relationship with the MPP.

# Script and Key Messages

## **Introduction**

- Thank the MPP for meeting with you
- Introduce yourself (exchanging business cards at the beginning of the meeting will ensure that they have your contact information after the meeting, but will also help the MPP remember the names of those in attendance)

## **Key Messages:**

- We're here to talk to you about the changing landscape of pharmacy in Canada.
- As a pharmacy student in your riding, I'm concerned about pharmacist's ongoing ability to deliver the care that patients have come to expect from their pharmacy because of the significant cuts that have affected the sector.
- Everything that pharmacists do is meant to ensure that patients have safe access to the medications that they need to be healthy. Pharmacists work with them so that they understand how to take their medications and what to expect from their treatment.
- More and more, Pharmacists are also providing other key primary care services to people in their community, like flu vaccinations, diagnosing and recommending treatments for common health issues, and supporting patients with chronic diseases.
- Their ability to do so is impacted by how their pharmacy is reimbursed.
- As the current pharmacy reimbursement model is tied to products, we anticipate that the new agreement to cut the price of generic medications will impact pharmacy significantly and could:
  - Limit my pharmacy's ability to further invest in innovative pharmacy practices that enhance patient care
  - Lead to shorter pharmacy hours and reduced staffing, resulting in longer wait times/delays for patients
- Disrupt the supply chain and exacerbate drug shortages
- [Insert personal story about how cuts have impacted pharmacy]
- I'm here today to outline what these cuts means to pharmacies, but also to propose some potential options that will help us not only adapt to the cuts, but provide even better care to my future patients.

## **Have a Conversation About the Issues and Listen to your MPP's Feedback.**

### **This Can be Done by:**

- Asking the MPP if they have any questions or thoughts about the issues, or the concerns that were identified
- Listening to any feedback that they might have

## **Close the meeting**

- Thank the MPP for their time
- Encourage them to share your discussions and issues with their colleagues and the Minister or Premier

## **Offer to Follow up on Any Specific Issue(s) Raised in the Meeting**

- Ask for a photo with them that can be shared on social media
  - Elected officials generally like taking photos with the people that they meet that they often share on social media to show their constituents what they are doing.
  - Social media is a great tool to support advocacy efforts. It raises awareness of issues, and can help spread the message beyond the individual message.
  - Let the MPP know that in Ontario we have an advocacy site – [www.ontariopharmacistscare.ca](http://www.ontariopharmacistscare.ca). Ask them to use the hashtag #pharmacistscare.