

The Prescribing Safely Canada Physician Prescribing Competencies



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The Prescribing Safely Canada – Physician Prescribing Competencies

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Competencies	Milestones	CanMEDS Roles
1. Perform a comprehensive assessment of the patient to identify a therapeutic target	1.1 Takes an appropriate medical, social and medication history including allergies and intolerances	Medical Expert, Communicator
	1.2 Undertakes an appropriate clinical assessment	Medical Expert
	1.3 Accesses and interprets all available and relevant patient records to ensure knowledge of the patients management to date	Medical Expert, Communicator, Collaborator
	1.4 Requests and interprets relevant investigations necessary to inform treatment options	Medical Expert
	1.5 Makes, confirms or understands, the working or final diagnosis by systematically considering the various possibilities (differential diagnosis)	Medical Expert
	1.6 Understands the condition(s) being treated, their natural progression and how to assess their severity, deterioration and anticipated response to treatment.	Medical Expert, Scholar
	1.7 Reviews adherence to and effectiveness of current medications	Communicator
	1.8 Refers to or seeks guidance from another member of the team, a specialist, or a prescribing information source when necessary	Collaborator, Scholar
2. Consider optimal pharmacological and non-pharmacological options	2.1 Considers both non-pharmacological (including no treatment) and pharmacological approaches to modifying disease and promoting health	Medical Expert, Advocate
	2.2 Considers all pharmacological treatment options including optimising doses as well as stopping treatment (appropriate polypharmacy, de-prescribing)	Medical Expert, Scholar
	2.3 Assesses the risks and benefits to the patient of taking or not taking a medication or treatment	Medical Expert
	2.4 Applies understanding of the mode of action and pharmacokinetics of medications and how these may be altered (e.g. by genetics, age, renal impairment, pregnancy)	Medical Expert, Scholar
	2.5 Assesses how co-morbidities, existing medication, allergies, contraindicators and quality of life impact on management options	Medical Expert, Advocate

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	2.6 Takes into account any relevant patient factors (e.g. ability to swallow, religion) and the potential impact on route of administration and formulation of medications	Medical Expert, Advocate
	2.7 Identifies, accesses, and uses reliable and validated sources of information and critically evaluates other information.	Scholar
	2.8 Stays up-to-date in own area of practice regarding medication-related evidence, and applies principles of evidence-based therapeutics to clinical and cost-effectiveness questions	Leader, Professional, Scholar
	2.9 Takes into account the wider perspective including public health issues related to medications and their use in promoting health (e.g. vaccines, appropriate use of antibiotics/opioids.)	Health Advocate, Scholar
	2.10 Understands antimicrobial resistance and the roles of infection prevention, control, and antimicrobial stewardship measures	Leader, Advocate, Medical Expert
3. Prescribe medications appropriate to the patient's diagnoses, considering cost and risk of benefit and harm.	3.1 Prescribes a medication only with adequate, up-to-date awareness of its benefits, harms, costs and indications.	Professional, Leader, Medical Expert, Scholar
	3.2 Understands the potential for adverse effects and takes steps to avoid/minimise, recognise and manage them.	Medical Expert, Leader
	3.3 Prescribes within relevant frameworks for medications use as appropriate (e.g. local formularies, care pathways, protocols and guidelines).	Scholar, Medical Expert, Leader, Professional
	3.4 Prescribes generic medications where available, taking into account benefits, harms and costs in comparison to branded products.	Leader, Medical Expert
	3.5 Understands and applies relevant jurisdiction frameworks for safe, effective and cost-effective medication use (eg, Health Canada, Canadian Agency for Technologies in Health Common Drug Review, provincial formulary (eg, Committee to Evaluate Drugs in Ontario), hospital formularies).	Scholar, Advocate, Leader, Professional

Competencies	Milestones	CanMEDS Roles
	3.6 Accurately completes and routinely checks calculations relevant to prescribing and practical dosing	Professional, Medical Expert
	3.7 Considers the potential for misuse of medications	Professional, Medical Expert, Scholar, Leader
	3.8 Electronically generates or writes legible unambiguous and complete prescriptions which meet legal requirements.	Collaborator , Professional, Communicator
	3.9 Effectively uses the systems necessary to prescribe medications (e.g. medicine charts, electronic prescribing, decision support)	Communicator, Collaborator, Leader
	3.10 Only prescribes medications that are 'off-label' (no Health Canada indication) for a particular condition if licensed medications have failed, and the 'off-label' medication has good evidence of benefit outweighing harm	Professional, Medical Expert
	3.11 Makes accurate and legible contemporaneous records and clinical notes of prescribing decisions	Communicator
	3.12 Communicates information about medications and what they are being used for when sharing or transferring prescribing responsibilities/information	Collaborator, Communicator, Medical Expert
4. Provide medication-relevant information ensuring patient/family understanding and ability to access	4.1 Checks the patient/family* understanding of and commitment to the patients management, monitoring and follow-up	Communicator, Collaborator, Medical Expert
	4.2 Gives the patient/family* clear, understandable and accessible information about their medications (e.g. what it is for, how to use it, possible unwanted effects and how to report them, expected duration of treatment)	Communicator, Collaborator, Medical Expert
	4.3 Guides patients/family* on how to identify reliable sources of information about their medications and treatment	Communicator, Scholar
	4.4 Ensures that the patient/family* knows what to do if there are any concerns about the management of their condition, if the condition deteriorates or if there is no improvement in a specific time frame.	Communicator, Collaborator, Medical Expert

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	4.5 Encourages and supports patients/families* to take an active role in self-managing their medications.	Communicator, Scholar, Leader
5. Reach a shared decision on medication use and monitoring with the patient and/or family	5.1 Works with the patient/family* in partnership to make informed choices, agreeing to a plan that respects patient preferences including their right to refuse or limit treatment	Communicator, Collaborator, Advocate
	5.2 Identifies and respects the patient in relation to diversity, values, beliefs and expectations about their health and treatment with medications	Communicator, Advocate, Professional
	5.3 Explains the rationale behind and the potential risks and benefits of management options in a way the patient/family* understands.	Communicator, Collaborator, Medical Expert
	5.4 Routinely assesses adherence in a non-judgemental way and understands the different reasons non-adherence can occur (intentional or non-intentional) and how best to support patients/families*	Communicator, Collaborator
	5.5 Builds a relationship which encourages appropriate prescribing and not the expectation that a prescription will be supplied	Communicator, Leader
	5.6 Works towards a shared understanding between patient and prescriber regarding the goals and outcomes of a consultation	Communicator, Advocate
6. Monitor and review the patient's medications and adherence at each encounter, aiming to optimize the regimen	6.1 Establishes and maintains a plan for reviewing the patient's treatment	Communicator, Leader, Medical Expert
	6.2 Ensures that the effectiveness of treatment and potential unwanted effects are monitored	Medical Expert, Communicator, Collaborator
	6.3 Detects and reports suspected adverse drug reactions using appropriate reporting systems	Medical Expert, Communicator, Collaborator, Professional
	6.4 Adapts the management plan in response to on-going monitoring and review of the patient's condition and preferences	Professional, Medical Expert, Collaborator, Advocate
7. Prescribe carefully with attention to medication safety	7.1 Prescribes within own scope of practice and recognises the limits of own knowledge and skill	Medical Expert, Scholar, Professional
	7.2 Knows about common types and causes of medication errors and how to prevent, avoid and detect them	Professional, Medical Expert, Scholar

Competencies	Milestones	CanMEDS Roles
	7.3 Identifies the potential risks associated with prescribing via remote media (telephone, email or through a third party) and takes steps to minimise them	Professional, Communicator, Collaborator, Leader
	7.4 Minimizes risks to patients by using or developing processes that support safe prescribing particularly in areas of high risk (e.g. transfer of information about medications prescribing of repeat medications)	Professional, Communicator, Collaborator, Advocate
	7.5 Keeps up to date with emerging safety concerns related to prescribing	Professional, Scholar
	7.6 Identifies and reports prescribing errors, near misses and critical incidents as required, and reviews practice to prevent recurrence.	Professional, Leader, Collaborator
8. Prescribe responsibly and ethically within legal and regulatory frameworks	8.1 Ensures confidence and competence to prescribe are maintained	Professional, Medical Expert
	8.2 Accepts personal responsibility for prescribing and understands the legal and ethical implications	Professional, Leader
	8.3 Knows and works within legal and regulatory frameworks affecting prescribing practice (e.g. controlled drugs, prescribing of unlicensed/off label medications, regulators guidance, supplementary prescribing)	Professional, Leader, Medical Expert, Scholar
	8.4 Makes prescribing decisions based on the needs of patients and not the prescriber's personal considerations	Professional, Advocate
	8.5 Recognises and deals with factors that might unduly influence prescribing (e.g. pharmaceutical industry, media, patient, colleagues)	Professional, Communicator, Leader
	8.6 Practices within ethical codes of conduct dealing with conflicts of interest and interaction with the pharmaceutical industry and its contractors.	Professional, Leader, Advocate
9. Critically assess and improve prescribing	9.1 Reflects on own and others prescribing practice and acts upon feedback and discussion	Scholar, Collaborator
	9.2 Acts upon colleagues' inappropriate or unsafe prescribing practice using profession-recommended mechanisms, with a focus on quality improvement.	Professional, Scholar, Leader, Advocate

Competencies	Milestones	CanMEDS Roles
	9.3 Understands and uses available tools to improve prescribing (e.g. patient and peer review feedback, prescribing data analysis and audit)	
10. Demonstrate leadership by fostering high quality medication management across the continuum of care	10.1 Acts as part of an interprofessional team to ensure continuity of care regarding medications across care settings.	Collaborator
	10.2 Establishes relationships with other professionals based on understanding, trust and respect for each other's roles in relation to prescribing	Collaborator, Communicator
	10.3 Clarifies role as a prescriber (e.g. supervision, follow-up support) when collaborating with other providers involved in a patient's circle of care.	Collaborator
	10.4 Provides support and advice to other prescribers or those involved in administration of medications where appropriate	Collaborator, Scholar

*Throughout the CanMEDS 2015 framework and Milestones Guide, references to the patient's family are intended to include all those who are personally - significant to the patient and are concerned with his or her care, including, according to the patient's circumstances, family members, partners, caregivers, legal guardians, and substitute decision-makers.