

Developed and Effective December 2020

Purpose

Under the Paramedics Profession Regulation, Primary Care Paramedics and Advanced Care Paramedics have been granted the authority to dispense medications incidental to the practice of paramedicine in accordance with Standards of Practice.¹ However, *at this time, Advanced Care Paramedics² are the only designation regulated by the College who are authorized to dispense medications.*

Dispensing within the context of the practice of the paramedic profession is limited to the purpose of bridging medication delivery in specific circumstances to provide flexibility in meeting immediate patient needs.

Dispensing must only occur in the case of an existing prescription for a patient who is already under the care of another healthcare professional who is authorized to prescribe (i.e. physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, psychiatrist, pharmacist).

Medications authorized for dispensing are limited to Schedule 1 drug or Schedule 2 drugs, within the meaning of the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*, as well as medications authorized through an exemption to the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.

Training and Competencies

Advanced Care Paramedics who are engaging in the practice of dispensing for the purposes of bridging medication must have successfully completed an approved training program and demonstrate competency in this activity. Advanced Care Paramedics who are authorized to dispense are identified with a “*Dispensing for the Purposes of Bridging Medication*” endorsement on their practice permit.

An Advanced Care Paramedic who engages in the activity of dispensing medications must have:

- “*Dispensing for the Purposes of Bridging Medication*” endorsement on their practice permit
- And may only do so in accordance with the
 - Standards of Practice,
 - Code of Ethics and
 - Practice Guidelines,
- as well as in accordance with any limitations set by employers’ policies and procedures.

Guidelines

Advanced Care Paramedics must consider the following questions when determining the appropriateness of dispensing bridging medication:

- Is the medication necessary to meet the immediate needs of patient?
- Is there organizational policy to support the practice?

¹ Paramedics Profession Regulation, section 16(2)(d)

² The Advanced Care Paramedic must have an active practice permit on the general register and must not have any conditions or directions to cease practice.

Guidelines (continued)

When dispensing a medication, Advanced Care Paramedics must ensure:

- the appropriateness of the prescribed medication for the client
- that practice setting dispensing policies and procedures are followed
- medication stability is maintained
- medications are dispensed in a child-proof container, except where inappropriate for the client
- if the medication is not dispensed in a child-resistant package, the Advanced Care Paramedic must be satisfied that:
 - the patient has been warned of the risks of not using a child-resistant package, or
 - the patient is aware of the associated risk.
- correct labeling of the medication package by including:
 - client name
 - medication name, dosage and route
 - prescriber's name and designation
 - directions for use, storage and handling
 - quantity dispensed
 - date dispensed
 - Advanced Care Paramedics initials and the practice setting phone number
 - expiry date, when appropriate
 - drug identification number, where appropriate
- when it is not possible to place complete directions for use on the prescription label, the Advanced Care Paramedic must ensure that complete written directions are provided on an instruction sheet accompanying the drug
- documentation of the dispensing in the client record including the name and dosage of the medication and the quantity dispensed
- client education occurs regarding the type of medication being dispensed, appropriate storage to ensure stability and integrity of the medication, appropriate handling, appropriate usage, dosage and route.

Definitions

Administration in Schedule 7.1 of the Government Organization Act is defined as the supplying of a dose of a drug to a person for the purposes of immediate ingestion, application, inhalation, insertion, installation or injection.

Bridging medication means a minimum supply of prescribed medication provided to a patient in where an existing, active and valid prescription exists, to ensure the patient has a sufficient amount of said medication until the patient can access the medication from a pharmacy.

Dispense in Schedule 7.1 of the Government Organization Act means to provide a drug pursuant to a prescription for a person but does not include the administration of a drug to a person.

Definitions (continued)

Dispensing in the Pharmacy and Drug Act is defined as evaluating a prescription for a drug, assessing the patient and the patient's health history, packaging and labelling of a drug; and providing a drug to a person pursuant to a prescription.

Prescription means as defined in the Pharmacy and Drug Act as a direction by a person who is authorized by an Act of the Legislature of Alberta or an Act of the Parliament of Canada to prescribe drugs, directing that a drug be dispensed to or for the patient named in the direction.

References

[Section 56 Class Exemption for Paramedics in Alberta - Canada.ca](#)

[Section 56 Class Exemption for Designated Administrators of Ambulance Operators in Alberta - Canada.ca](#)

[Section 56 Class Exemption for Medical Directors in Alberta - Canada.ca](#)