

Statement from the Pharmacists' Association of the Niagara Peninsula

Re: The Sunset of PrescribeIT and the Future of E-Prescribing in Canada

The Pharmacists' Association of the Niagara Peninsula (PANP) acknowledges the announcement that PrescribeIT will sunset its current national e-prescribing service and transition toward an open-standards framework. This moment represents an important opportunity to reset how e-prescribing is designed, governed and funded in Canada.

PANP supports an open-standards approach to e-prescribing that prioritizes interoperability, clinician workflow and patient access to care. A modern e-prescribing ecosystem must allow multiple vendors to innovate on a shared standard, rather than relying on a single centralized platform. Open standards can enable competition, flexibility and long-term sustainability while maintaining patient safety and continuity of care.

Over the past year, PANP has been directly engaged in advocacy related to PrescribeIT implementation in the Niagara region. After several physician offices issued notices requiring pharmacies to use PrescribeIT exclusively and refusing alternative communication channels, PANP established a formal reporting line for member pharmacies. This mechanism allowed pharmacies to submit instances where exclusive platform requirements were being imposed on them.

PANP reviewed these reports and intervened on behalf of affected pharmacies, including drafting formal correspondence to physician offices and escalating concerns to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Through this process, clarification was obtained that exclusive communication requirements are not appropriate and should not create barriers to patient access or interprofessional collaboration. This experience underscored the importance of ensuring that digital tools support cooperation between providers rather than introducing friction or unintended access barriers.

PANP also remains concerned about the sustainability of funding models for national digital health infrastructure. Community pharmacies are essential front-line healthcare providers operating in an environment of prolonged funding pressure. A financial model for e-prescribing that rests primarily or solely on pharmacies is neither equitable nor sustainable. Digital infrastructure that benefits the entire healthcare system should be supported through shared responsibility among governments and system partners, not downloaded onto a single sector.

As Canada transitions toward a new framework for e-prescribing, PANP calls for:

- A transparent, open-standards national architecture that enables interoperability and vendor innovation
- Equitable and sustainable funding that does not disproportionately burden community pharmacies
- Meaningful engagement of pharmacists in governance and implementation decisions
- Transition planning that protects continuity of patient care and minimizes workflow disruption

PANP remains committed to constructive collaboration with physicians, regulators, governments and digital health partners. Our goal is a national e-prescribing ecosystem that strengthens patient care, respects professional collaboration and is financially sustainable for all participants.

— The Pharmacists' Association of the Niagara Peninsula



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