

13 April 2018

Via Email

The Editor  
Regina Leader Post  
P.O. Box 2020,  
Regina, SK S4P 3G4

**RE: Opinion, April 11, 2018 – Patients should be wary of simple solutions**

Dr. Sivertson rightly asserts that expanding pharmacist's scope of practice to effect better access to care for Canadians is a complex issue, requiring collaboration and appropriate training to ensure continuous and comprehensive care (*Opinion, April 11, 2018 – Patients should be wary of simple solutions*). Among the more concerning points of the article was the insinuation that pharmacists will somehow drop the ball and perhaps even act unethically. Evidence points to the contrary, particularly in hypertension care.

Indeed, there are dozens of trials that conclusively demonstrate the benefit of pharmacist care in hypertension management. Furthermore, a recent study showed that not only is hypertension treatment by prescribing pharmacists (working with patients and physicians) better than usual care, but it also would save about \$15.7 billion over 30 years. This is not just because of reduced physician visits, but more importantly, because of massive reductions in strokes, heart attacks and kidney failure. Based upon this evidence, we assert that it would be risky to our health care system to *not* implement this important advance. As such, Hypertension Canada strongly supports the role of pharmacist care, including prescribing, in collaboration with patients and care providers as part of a best-evidence approach in facing the hypertension epidemic.

Like physicians, pharmacists are independent, licensed primary health care providers. They take responsibility for their decisions and collaborate with other health care providers. And, they know medications and their patients that receive them. Canadians and physicians are already seeing the benefit of expanded pharmacists scope through pharmacist-provided flu shots, and other services such as travel vaccinations, smoking cessation, urinary tract infections, cholesterol, and diabetes care. Rather than fragmenting care, pharmacists have actually reconnected many of these patients who do not or cannot see a physician.

With more than 15 million Canadians at risk for or living with hypertension today – critical among those are 1 million with out of control hypertension which can lead to chronic and deadly complications, and 1 million who are completely unaware they have hypertension – physicians and pharmacists need to work together to tackle the un-met patient needs. Respectfully, rather than baseless fear mongering, we believe that collaboration in evidence-based patient care is the right thing to do for Canadians.

Sincerely,  
HYPERTENSION CANADA



Dr. Nadia Khan,  
President & Chair of the Board



Dr. Ross Tsuyuki,  
Director of the Board