



ISMP Canada and Canadian Patient Safety Institute Team Up with GS1 Canada to Advance Patient Safety in Canada

Two of Canada's patient safety organizations – Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada (ISMP Canada) and Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI) are collaborating with GS1 Canada, a global supply chain standards organization, to advance automated identification (e.g., bar coding) of pharmaceutical products in Canada. To this end, the three organizations are working collaboratively to advance the Canadian Pharmaceutical Bar Coding Project. This cooperation will allow the three organizations to combine their respective expertise and outreach to the healthcare community in support of an improved Canadian patient safety environment. It has been demonstrated that the inadvertent administration of incorrect medications can be significantly reduced through implementation of advanced technologies such as bar coding at the point of care.

The national collaborative project was initiated after analyses of medication incidents, such as the inadvertent administration of hydromorphone instead of morphine, led to recommendations that healthcare facilities implement advanced, standards-based technologies, such as bar coding, to serve as an automated independent double check. The joint collaboration complements work already underway to add another significant layer of safety to the Canadian healthcare system.

In May 2009, CPSI and ISMP Canada jointly endorsed the adoption of the GS1 global standard for automatic identification of pharmaceutical products (medications) in Canada. Through the Canadian Pharmaceutical Bar Coding Project, the healthcare system is working to proactively and cooperatively reach agreement on implementation of the standards, moving toward use of bar coding to enhance safety checks at multiple points along the medication-use process in both retail and institutional environments, such as compounding and dispensing prescriptions, and dose administration.