

Medication Safety Exchange

Healthcare organizations providing patient care in Canada analyze medication incidents that occur in their organizations. The valuable knowledge gained from these local analyses can benefit other healthcare providers and organizations, and importantly – prevent patient harm from similar incidents. The Med Safety Exchange is a webinar series hosted by the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada (ISMP Canada) that offers a dynamic and supportive mechanism for shared knowledge while supporting the dissemination of incident learning. It fosters a learning culture and the development of strategies and safeguards for preventing patient harm.

The first six webinars held from September 2017 to February 2018, reflected national interest and participation, with participation from all provinces and most territories. Webinar presenters represented both grassroots facilities as well as national organizations, such as the Canadian Patient Safety Institute (CPSI), Health Canada, ISMP Canada (including the Community Pharmacy Reporting Program – CPhIR), the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), and the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists (CSHP).

Participants' responses to a post-webinar survey demonstrated perceived utility of the medication safety-related learnings, willingness to implement presented recommendations to optimize medication safety, and the value of medication incident reporting (Figure 1).

THE MED SAFETY EXCHANGE IS A WEBINAR SERIES HOSTED BY THE INSTITUTE FOR SAFE MEDICATION PRACTICES CANADA (ISMP CANADA)

The success of the pilot demonstrated that the Med Safety Exchange is a valuable, practical, and beneficial program to promote reporting, sharing, and learning for all healthcare practitioners across Canada. Visit the website (<https://www.ismp-canada.org/MedSafetyExchange/>) to register for the next webinar, and contact medsafetyexchange@ismpcanada.ca to share learning from your medication incident analyses and your medication safety initiatives! **1**

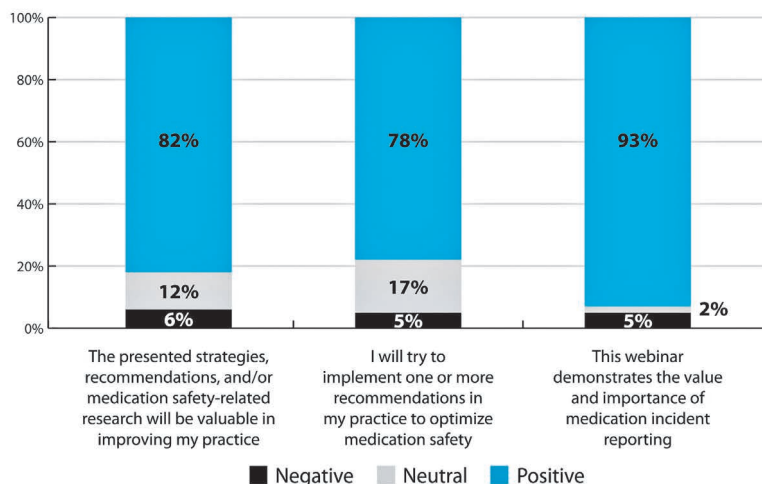


Figure 1: Responses to the post-webinar survey questions related to medication safety culture.

This article was submitted by Ambika Sharma, Pharmacist and Michael Hamilton, Physician, ISMP Canada.

Telepharmacy services in Canada

By Sammu Dhaliwall

With its large land mass and population density in relatively few pockets, Canada's hospital pharmacy departments across the country face immense challenges providing pharmacist services. Many remote and rural communities are unable to recruit the services of a pharmacist for daytime work, and don't have the economies of scale to keep a full time pharmacist busy. As technologies have advanced to improve the safety of medication distribution systems, even urban hospitals in populated areas have yet to embrace the true safety nets that pharmacists bring when medication orders are verified around-the-clock. The vast majority of hospital pharmacies still shut down overnight, despite the fact that healthcare is 24/7 and many of our sickest patients are ordered medications overnight. For such reasons, telepharmacy has been a growing service offer for health institutions over the past 15 years.

The Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists defines telepharmacy as "The use of telecommunications technology to facilitate or enable the delivery of high-quality pharmacy services in situations where the patient or healthcare team does not have direct (in-person) contact with pharmacy staff."¹ Telepharmacy can be used to in many ways, for example, clinically review new orders 24/7, remotely check sterile IV preparations, or provide counseling to patients at discharge from the hospital.

The first recognized telepharmacy services in Canada were within some of the health regions of British Columbia and New Brunswick in 2003, in which larger regional hospitals helped review orders for certain small hospitals that didn't have regular onsite pharmacists to help support the patients. In 2004, a private telepharmacy company started providing remote clinical order review to a hospital in Moose Factory, Ontario, as the hospital

was not able to recruit a pharmacist. This telepharmacy company today services over 45 hospitals, providing remote clinical order review around-the-clock and additionally helps pharmacy departments meet medication management standards by experimenting with videoconference technologies (including Ontario Telemedicine Network's secure links to healthcare institutions). While there are many other current examples of telepharmacy services provided across the country, large gaps remain, leaving many deficiencies in pharmacy services.

Technologies utilized to provide Telepharmacy in Canada include:

MEDICATION ORDER MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

- Allowing nurses to scan physician medication orders securely to the remote pharmacist in hospitals which are still mostly paper-based
- Enable one pharmacist to manage multiple hospitals simultaneously with clinical support and specific medication reviews overnight to improve efficiencies and safety

VIDEOCONFERENCE SOLUTIONS

- Allowing pharmacists to communicate with patients for education and discharge counselling
- Enabling pharmacists to communicate with physicians, nurses and other healthcare providers.

REMOTE CAMERA VERIFICATION SOLUTIONS

(which bring telepharmacy support to one of the highest risk areas of hospital pharmacy – compounding of sterile products, chemotherapy, and non-sterile medications):

- Allowing for remote check of compounded products by pharmacist or pharmacy technician and future traceability of products if errors are suspected or recalls occur.