

# Medication Incident Reporting and Continuous Quality Improvement

By Phillip Yang and Certina Ho

**O**Imagine an application that can help revolutionize our nation’s medication safety by allowing health care practitioners to report, share, and learn from medication incidents. The Community Pharmacy Incident Reporting (CPhIR) program designed by the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada (ISMP Canada) with support from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, has provided community and ambulatory pharmacies with an online platform to share lessons learned from medication incidents and help prevent similar events from occurring in the future. The CPhIR program also contributes to the Canadian Medication Incident Reporting and Prevention System (CMIRPS), a national collaborative program between the general public and health care providers (e.g. nurses, physicians) that has generated essential knowledge about harmful medication incidents, including types and trends, underlying causes and preventative measures, since its establishment in 2003.

The CPhIR program has been successfully implemented at all community pharmacies in Nova Scotia since 2010. “We’re very pleased with the feedback from community pharmacies currently utilizing CPhIR for continuous quality improvement and the advancement of safe medication use. CPhIR is a special program



made to accommodate the community pharmacy setting; it is designed to learn from vulnerabilities found in the unique medication-use processes at these locations,” says David U, President & CEO, ISMP Canada. “CPhIR is a tool that has the potential to change the state of medication incident reporting and help prevent the recurrence of errors, which will ultimately enhance patient safety.”

ISMP Canada developed the CPhIR program to expedite the way that near misses and medication incidents are reported and shared among community and ambulatory pharmacies. The CPhIR program is an online application that is quick and easy-to-use. From the point where you login to the point where an ISMP Canada Analyst receives your medication incident data for further analysis, it only takes approximately five minutes. To report a medication incident, the pharmacy staff member will fill out an online tem-

plate, which consists of primarily check-boxes and drop-down menus; and all submissions are kept anonymous.

The CPhIR program also features a statistical analysis tool that is used by community and ambulatory pharmacies for continuous quality improvement, where pharmacy managers or administrators can compare their pharmacy’s quality improvement performance against the aggregate performance of all other pharmacies that are using the CPhIR program.

You may wonder how hospital health-care providers may benefit from the CPhIR program. While outpatient and ambulatory pharmacies in hospitals may use the CPhIR program to report, share, and learn from medication incidents, ISMP Canada also provides hospital health care providers access to the Individual Practitioner Reporting (IPR) program at [https://www.ismp-canada.org/err\\_ipr.htm](https://www.ismp-canada.org/err_ipr.htm). Reporting by individual practitioners is an important

component in identifying early opportunities for enhancing medication safety.

Through the analysis of near misses and medication incidents that were reported to the CPhIR program and the IPR program, ISMP Canada Analysts review potential contributing factors of the incidents and provide recommendations to healthcare practitioners via the dissemination of safety bulletins, newsletters, and alerts at <https://www.ismp-canada.org/ISMPSafetyBulletins.htm>. By learning from medication incidents in the community, ambulatory, and hospital settings, healthcare practitioners can apply their knowledge to prevent medication incidents in their own work environment.

The CPhIR programs has revolutionized the way community and ambulatory pharmacies report, share, and learn from medication incidents. The benefits seen in community pharmacies can be extended to hospitals, and vice versa. It is through the reporting, sharing, and learning from medication incidents that we strive to continuously improve our quality of care and patient safety.

A complimentary trial of the CPhIR program is available upon request by email to ISMP Canada at [cphir@ismp-canada.org](mailto:cphir@ismp-canada.org). 

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