

The Facts on the Green Shield Canada (GSC) *Value-Based Pharmacy Initiative*

What it is

This fall Green Shield Canada (GSC) plans to introduce a new program called the *Value-Based Pharmacy Initiative*. This will be the first such payor-led program in Canada that seeks to measure, evaluate and eventually rank a pharmacy's performance against a defined set of U.S.-based health outcomes metrics, which would be assessed entirely on an analysis of GSC claims data. GSC will eventually use pharmacies' performance on these metrics to determine reimbursement.

Using a monthly *Patient-Impact Scorecard*, pharmacies will receive feedback on the following measures of performance:

1. Adherence measures - measured as "proportion of days covered"
2. Disease management measures - focused on statin use, asthma, and GSC cardiovascular Health Coaching
3. Safety measures - high risk medication use in the elderly

This Value-Based Pharmacy Initiative was first announced in GSC's April 2017 *Pharmacy Update*. Since that time, GSC has met with stakeholders, including CPhA, provincial pharmacy associations and Neighbourhood Pharmacies, as well as several chains and banner organizations, to present details on the program.

While we believe quality improvement is important for pharmacy, many details of the GSC initiative remain unclear and there are a number of outstanding issues from a pharmacy perspective to be resolved. In the coming days, all pharmacies will receive a notice from GSC with additional information about the program; however, we have included below some background information on the proposed program.

Please note that this program has largely been developed *without* the input of pharmacy and while we look forward to working with GSC as they roll out the program, pharmacy stakeholders have not yet endorsed this initiative.

How it works

The GSC initiative is based on the American [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services \(CMS\) Five-Star Quality Rating System](#) which rates *health plans* on multiple measures/metrics. The metrics in the U.S. have been developed by the Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA), a non-profit alliance of more than 200 member organizations that include the major American pharmacy chains, academic institutions, health plans and pharmaceutical companies.

In order to access benchmarking data and detailed information on how to improve their ratings, pharmacies would use an online platform called EQUIPP. While pharmacies are not required to use EQUIPP, GSC has indicated that the use of the program would help pharmacists improve their ratings, and it is our understanding that the cost for accessing EQUIPP ranges from \$150-\$400 per pharmacy per year.

Rollout

We understand that the GSC initiative will roll out in multiple phases, the first of which will be later this year, where pharmacies will receive a preliminary scorecard based on current performance. It should be noted that *performance will only be measured when GSC is the first payor.*

The second phase, mid-2018, will include educating plan sponsors and plan members (your patients) on the scores and sharing the ratings with members through their online portal. The third phase will be rolled out in 2019 and it will introduce reimbursement changes associated with performance in achieving the GSC measures.

Next Steps

As GSC is the first payor to introduce a pay-for-performance model in Canada, we recognize the need to thoroughly evaluate the potential impact, benefits and unintended consequences of this initiative and also learn from the American experience. For example, we are uncertain if the U.S.-based metrics on which U.S. health plans are evaluated are relevant in the Canadian context. The U.S. model is designed to evaluate multiple aspects of patient care, including physicians, and CPhA and its partners will monitor if this mechanism is applicable in Canada when only pharmacy is evaluated. While pharmacy has not yet provided its endorsement to this payor-led initiative, our goal is to limit the burden on pharmacists as well as ensure a smooth transition.

GSC, CPhA, your provincial pharmacy association and Neighbourhood Pharmacies have a shared goal of ensuring that pharmacy plays a meaningful, positive and collaborative role in improved medication management and a better quality of care. As the rollout of the GSC Value-Based Pharmacy Initiative moves forward, pharmacy must be fully engaged and play a key role in identifying issues and defining solutions. To that end, we will collectively continue to engage with GSC to address the profession's questions and concerns and better understand the impact this initiative has on pharmacies and the patients you serve.