Spring 2009

The Transition Times

NAVIGATE

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Focusing on the need, not the numbers

Competence by the numbers

- Continuing Education Unit (CEU) issued per hour of learning
- 11 Months you have to collect the 15 CEUs needed for next year's registration renewal
- 15 CEUs you need each year to renew your annual permit
- **20** Percentage of registrants selected for audit each year
- 50 Minimum CEUs you must accrue in a year to be recognized by ACP as a "Super Learner"
- 100 Percentage of Albertans who will benefit from having competent, professional pharmacists!

Which is the only one of these numbers that should have any impact on how you choose which professional development opportunities to pursue? If you said the last one (100), you're right!



Numbers vs. need

Yes, 15 continuing education units (CEUs) meet registration renewal requirements, but did those courses really meet the needs of your patients and your personal learning needs? Are your course choices the best investment of your professional development time?

Hepler and Strand remind us that pharmaceutical care can only be accomplished when there is "a mutually beneficial exchange in which the patient grants authority to the provider and the provider gives competence and commitment (accepts responsibility) to the patient."1

continued on page 2

alberta college of pharmacists

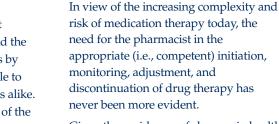


Numbers vs. need continued from page 1

Clearly, pharmacists' distinctive competency is based on the use of their knowledge base to ensure the appropriate and safe use of drugs in patients. The profession's value centers around the design of medication-use systems that provide efficient and safe procurement, storage, preparation, dispensing, and administration of pharmaceuticals.

However, like many other trades and professions, the knowledge base of our profession is no longer the exclusive

domain of the pharmacist. The availability of travel, the significant increases in medical publishing, and the Internet have all provided methods by which information is made available to professionals and non-professionals alike. Possession is no longer nine tenths of the law. How well we develop and maintain our expertise and apply it to our patients will determine whether we have a distinctive competency compared with other health professionals and perhaps even the lay public.²



Given the rapid pace of changes in health care, the need for practitioners to stay abreast of new development has also never been greater. The opportunities for practice improvement are unprecedented.

As a health professional, you have an obligation to yourself, your patients, your college, and your colleagues to ensure that you are competent. Furthermore, you need to ensure that you are competent in areas that best serve your practice and your patients.

Rather than repeat a frantic scramble for CEUs next May, or take courses just for the sake of CEUs, why not make a plan now? This issue of *Transition Times* is designed to help you:

- understand what professional competence is;
- assess your personal knowledge, skills, and attitudes;
- create a plan for your own professional development; and
- offer quick tips to improve your practice right away.
- Hepler CD, Strand LM, "Opportunities and responsibilities in pharmaceutical care," Am J Hosp Pharm, 1990, 47:533-43
- Kvancz, D. A., "A Distinctive Competency: Pharmacy's Distinctive Competencies," Am J of Health-System Pharm, 2006, 63(9):819-828





Competence is multifaceted and contextual. According to the *Health Professions Act* (HPA), competence means the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment required to provide professional services.

ACP's Competence Committee has adopted this definition of competence.

What is ACP's role in pharmacists' competence?

ACP's mandate is to protect the health and well-being of the public. Therefore, the college is responsible for ensuring that all pharmacists in Alberta are competent. The *Health Professions Act* also requires all health professionals' colleges to implement a continuing competence program.

ACP's competence program serves two purposes: to protect the public and help

pharmacists. The program complements other initiatives that ACP administers to fulfill its mission of governing the pharmacy profession in Alberta to support and protect the public's health and well-being. Secondly, it is a quality improvement tool to help pharmacists meet their personal professional responsibility to be competent.

ACP encourages pharmacists to practise at the forefront of the profession. The college supports leading edge practice through partnership with the U of A's Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and its Practice Development Office, joint educational ventures with other colleges and associations, course accreditation, and through ACP's RxCEL Competence Program. This is in keeping with the legislated mandate of health professions' continuing competence program – "to maintain competence and to enhance the

provision of professional services" (*Health Professions Act*).

With the goal of practice improvement always in mind, ACP's continuing competence program has been continually revised to meet evolving expectations for health professionals' competence.

- 1976 Mandatory continuing education (CE) was introduced
- 1988 On-site assessment added
- 2000 ACP revised the mandatory CE program to the RxCEL Learning Portfolio system
- 2005 RxCEL Continuing Professional Development Plan rolled out
- 2008 Online Continuing Professional Development Plan introduced
- 2009 ACP will introduce two new competence assessment tools: the knowledge exam and the professional portfolio

Knowledge

practice setting

Background knowledge to provide professional

services in a particular



Psychomotor and problem-solving skills to provide professional services relevant to the practice

Attitudes

Attitudes and values aligned with those of the practice and related to job responsibilities, relationship with patients and other healthcare providers, and responsibility to the profession

Judgment

Knowledge and experience gained through practice and application of clinical judgment



Competence

This chart is adapted from Nimmo and Holland; Copyright ASHP, 1999



ACP needs your help!

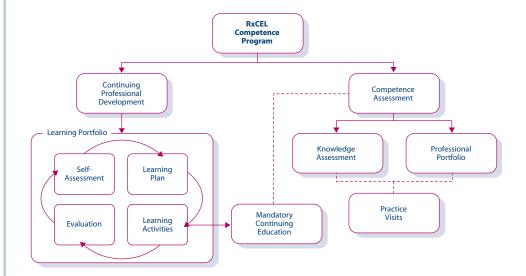
As we develop the Knowledge Assessment we need practising pharmacists from a variety of practice settings, age groups, and locations to help ensure the exam is relevant to practice. We're looking for volunteers in the following areas:

- Knowledge Assessment Committee
- 2. Item writers
- 3. Exam reviewers
- Pilot participants (pilot participants will be exempt from competence assessment for three years).

We are also undertaking a complete review of the *Competency Profile for Alberta Pharmacists* to ensure it is accurate, complete, and current. We need volunteers for a focus group to review and update the Competency Profile in September or October 2009.

If you'd like to put your name forward for any of these activities please contact Roberta Stasyk, Competence Director, at Roberta.Stasyk@pharmacists.ab.ca.

The RxCEL Competence Program consists of two branches: Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Competence Assessment. The two branches complement each other, but are distinct in their purposes: one supports professional development and the other evaluates competence.



What am I required to do in the RxCEL Competence Program?

1. Engage in meaningful learning every year.

- As an Alberta pharmacist you must maintain and enhance your professional knowledge and skills through continuing education activities.
- You must obtain a minimum of 15 CEUs per CE Year.
- You may obtain these CEUs from accredited or non-accredited learning activities as long as it is relevant to your practice.
- There is no minimum requirement for accredited CEUs.
- You may claim credit for learning activities other than accredited pharmacy-specific programs, i.e., non-accredited learning, by completing a Non-accredited Learning Record.
- You must document your practicerelated learning using a learning

portfolio, summarize your activities on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Log, and submit the summary to the college each year at the time of registration renewal.

Note that the "CE Year" is different from the "Registration Year". The CE year runs from June 1 to the following May 31, to coincide with the deadline for registration renewal.

- 2. Comply with the Audit of Professional Declarations when selected for audit.
 - See page 9 for more audit information.
- 3. Participate in competence assessment when selected.
- 4. Read the Competence Program Rules to fully understand your obligations.

Rules available on ACP's website under *Continuing Competence*.

The ethics of competence

In ACP's new Code of Ethics, which came into effect on May 22, 2009, the ninth principle is dedicated to competence.

Principle **IX**Ensure that I am competent

To uphold this principle, I:

- Continuously improve my level of professional knowledge and skill.
- Take responsibility for maintaining a high standard of professional competence.
- Evaluate my individual practice and assume responsibility for improvement.
- Keep informed about new pharmaceutical knowledge.
- Respond constructively to the outcomes of competence assessments and practice visits, as well as other appraisals and reviews of my professional performance and undertake further training when necessary.
- Restrict my practice within the limitations of my personal competence.

Let's look at how to put this principle into practice.

Continuously improving

Why maintain competence?

Patients have every right to assume that a health care provider's licence to practice is the government's assurance of his or her *current* professional competence, and clinicians themselves would like assurance that those with whom they practice are current and fully competent.³

Maintenance of personal professional competence is a professional responsibility and the hallmark of self-regulated professionals. In this context, maintenance doesn't mean "staying the same," it means "keeping up with (or ahead of) the changes around you." Given the changes occurring in pharmacy practice and health care right now, maintaining competence is more important – and challenging – than ever.

According to the International Pharmacy Federation (FIP), "Maintaining competence throughout a career, during which new and challenging professional responsibilities will be encountered, is a fundamental ethical requirement for all health professionals."

Under the *Pharmaceutical Profession Regulation* (s.32), you must meet the requirements of the continuing competence program in order to apply for renewal of your annual practice permit. Your practice permit can not be renewed if you have not submitted proof of completion of the minimum number of continuing education units (CEUs).



- 3. Citizens Advocacy Center, Maintaining and Improving Health Professional Competence: The Citizen Advocacy Center Road Map to Continuing Competence Assurance, Washington, DC, 2004, p. i.
- 4. International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), FIP Statement of Professional Standards: Continuing Professional Development, Nice, 2002, p. 1.

Taking responsibility for maintaining my competence

Why can't I just get my minimum 15 CEUs each year from whatever is convenient?

It is the responsibility of all pharmacists to maintain and enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities relevant to **their** practice. Just accruing 15 CEUs from whatever is convenient, or easy, or free, does not necessarily help you maintain your competence in your area of practice or address the gaps in your competence.

How can I know what I don't know?

How can you make sure you are a competent pharmacist? It is true that it can be difficult to determine your own competence. We all have things about ourselves that we are not aware of (unless someone points them out to us). There are also things about ourselves that we are reluctant to admit.

Our professional practice is no different. It is part of our professional responsibility to maintain and enhance our knowledge, skills and abilities relevant to our own practice. It is also our professional

responsibility to limit our practice to those activities that we are competent to perform.

Perform a self-assessment

Performing a thorough and honest self-assessment is the first step to understanding **your** strengths and your weaknesses. It allows you to consider your learning needs in all the competencies required in your practice. It also allows you to determine your boundaries so that you can limit your practice to those activities that you are competent to perform.

Use the right tool

It is important to use a comprehensive self-assessment tool, such as the one included with the *RxCEL Continuing Professional Development Plan*. It is based on the *Competency Profile for Alberta Pharmacists* and will ensure that you are prompted to consider areas that you may not think of. For example, do you ask yourself if you are able to "adjust and respond to a variety of cultural and social influences such as: age, education, spirituality, religious beliefs,

culture, heritage, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnic beliefs and lifestyle"?⁵ It is also important to consider the context in which you use these skills, knowledge and abilities.

Performing a thorough self-assessment sets the groundwork for your professional development.

How can I gauge my competence in a particular area?

As already stated, self-assessment is the first step. If it's an area you've developed expertise in, you will probably be well aware of the literature, clinical practice guidelines, and best practices. However, self-assessment is not enough to assure yourself, your patients, your colleagues, and ACP that you are competent. The inaccuracies of self-assessment are well-documented.⁶

Davis et al. support the use of **external assessments** to augment self-assessment: "given that some improvement needs (e.g., those in the psychosocial realm) may be more difficult to self-assess, methods such as multi-source feedback (360°) evaluations may be a necessary next step, particularly when interpersonal skills, communication skills, or professionalism needs to be evaluated."

You can ask colleagues for feedback on your skills, knowledge and abilities. You can also look to external assessments such as performance reviews and ACP's competence assessments. You will discover things you didn't know about yourself and your practice, some of them very good!



You can find ACP's comprehensive and detailed self-assessment within the RxCEL Continuing Professional Development Plan under Continuing Competence/RxCEL learning portfolio on the ACP website http://pharmacists.ab.ca).



- 5. Alberta College of Pharmacists, RxCEL Continuing Professional Development Plan, 2005, p. 146.
- Davis, D.A., Mazmanian, P., Fordis, M., Van Harrison, R., Thorpe, K.E., Perrier, L., "Accuracy of physician selfassessment compared with observed measures of competence: A systemic review," *Journal of American Medical Association*, 296 (9), Sept. 2006, 1094-1102.

Eva, K.W., Cunnington, J.P.W., Reiter, H.I., Keane, D.R., Norman, G.R., "How can I know what I don't know? Poor self-assessment in a well-defined domain," *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 9(3), Sept. 2004, 211–224.

Kak, N., Burkhalter, B., and Cooper, M.A. (2001), "Measuring the competence of healthcare providers," *Quality Assurance Project Issue Paper*, 2 (1).

Kruger, J. and Dunning, D., "Unskilled and unaware of it: How difficulties in recognizing one's own incompetence lead to inflated self-assessments," *Journal of Personality*, Dec. 1999.

Davis, D.A., Mazmanian, P., Fordis, M., Van Harrison, R., Thorpe, K.E., Perrier, L., "Accuracy of physician self-assessment compared with observed measures of competence: A systemic review," *Journal of American Medical Association*, 296 (9), Sept. 2006, 1101.



Purpose

The RxCEL Competence Program supports Alberta pharmacists in the development and maintenance of knowledge, skills, and abilities for excellence in their pharmacy practice, while protecting the public's health and well-being.

Principles

The RxCEL Competence Program embodies the following:

- fair and valid assessment mechanisms;
- transparent processes;
- tools that are applicable to all practice settings and the evolving role and scope of pharmacist practice so they are applicable to the individual pharmacist;
- confidentiality; and
- ongoing program review and enhancement.

Evaluating my practice

How can I make sure I **stay** competent?

The Alberta College of Pharmacists is committed to supporting the competence of licensed pharmacists. To that end we administer the RxCEL Competence Program. The RxCEL Competence Program establishes a critical link between the continuing education efforts of pharmacists, maintenance of competence, and practice improvement.

1. Engage in meaningful, planned continuing professional development

The RxCEL Continuing Professional Development Plan provides you with tools to effectively manage your continuing professional development. The plan includes tools for:

- self-assessment,
- developing a learning plan,
- documenting your learning, and
- evaluating your learning.

Self-Assessment

Take a personal inventory of your competency skill set. What do you already know? What areas do you want to develop and improve? What areas are not applicable to your practice?

Learning Plan

Learning

Plan

Learning

Activities

Develop your learning plan based on what you discovered in the self-assessment. What are your learning objectives? What learning activities can address your learning objectives? How

are you going to achieve your learning objectives? By what date do you want to complete the necessary learning?

Evaluation

Evaluate how participating in the activities benefits both you and your patients, and reflect on how the learning will affect your practice. What have you learned? How will you apply this new skill or knowledge to your practice? How will it affect your patients? Do you need to do further learning?

Learning Activities

Implement your learning plan by completing learning activities, such as taking courses or reading articles. Was you learning planned? Unplanned? Have you completed the required documentation?

Self-

Assessment

How can I plan my learning?

Start with a self-assessment of your current competencies. You can select a few areas or complete the entire self-assessment. You can find the online version of the RxCEL Continuing Professional Development Plan on the ACP website under Continuing Competence.

Once you've identified areas you would like to or need to work on, you develop a learning plan that identifies what you want to learn, how you think you might learn it, and by when. Then, implement your learning plan by undertaking learning activities (accredited or non-

accredited), evaluating your learning (Did I learn what I wanted to learn? Do I need to do more learning?) and implementing your new skills and knowledge into practice.

2. Conduct thorough, honest, regular self-assessments

As we've already discussed, your self-assessment will be the foundation for developing a learning plan. You can also use the self-assessment to assess your competency when taking on a new job or responsibilities or new role, and then plan relevant professional development activities.



Do I have to submit my completed self-assessment to the college?

While we strongly encourage all pharmacists to complete a self-assessment and personal learning plan, it is not mandatory to submit your CPD Plan to the college. The only forms you must submit to the college are the Continuing Professional Development Log each year when you renew your registration.

Consider external assessments and feedback regularly

Ask your peers, colleagues and patients for feedback. Find out not only if your actions are meeting their expectations, but what they consider to be most important and how satisfied they are with your efforts to address their important issues.

Through the ACP Competence Program you will be selected for competence assessment at least every five years. These audits are not designed to be punitive, but rather to provide you with constructive feedback to help you develop your practice and validation of the areas you know very well.

How does ACP assess competence?

The RxCEL Competence Program includes valid and fair mechanisms to assess pharmacists' competence. Because of the variations in pharmacists' practice throughout Alberta and because of the evolving and expanding role of pharmacists, assessment of competence must be flexible. The assessment mechanisms are knowledge assessment, review of professional portfolio, and onsite assessments (also known as "practice visits").

On-site assessment

The main goal of the on-site assessment program is to observe pharmacists at their practice sites to ensure pharmacy is carried out at a competent level. Pharmacists may have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to practice at a high level, but may be limited by their environments. The Competence Committee believes it is important to review pharmacists' performances within their own practice site.

After each on-site assessment, you will be asked to complete an evaluation of the process. You can view the evaluation form at https://pharmacists.ab.ca/document_library/ph-eval0999.pdf.

How does the college audit pharmacists' learning portfolios?

The Competency Committee has established the guidelines for learning portfolio audit. These guidelines will be provided to you if you are selected for Audit of Professional Declarations. Some of the audits will be random and some may be triggered by other factors, such as questionable entries on the continuing professional development log or previous issues during audit.

If you haven't been chosen for an audit, but would like a copy of the guidelines, please call the college office at 780-990-0321 or 1-877-227-3838, or email compentenceinfo@pharmacists.ab.ca

Learning portfolio reviews may be done in conjunction with another assessment, e.g., on-site assessment or field inspection.

Audit do's and don'ts checklist

The audit process should be very straightforward as it is merely confirming the declarations made at the time of registration renewal regarding professional liability insurance and learning activities. However, every year we find that for various reasons many audits do not proceed as they should, take up valuable time for the pharmacist and ACP staff, and may impede or prevent registration renewal. The following steps can improve the process for everyone.



Do:

- only claim learning that you are able to substantiate with certificates or non-accredited learning records;
- ▲ read the Guidelines for Audit of Professional Declarations carefully so you understand what you must submit to ACP (the Guidelines are included with the notice of audit);
- provide copies of course certificates for accredited programs;
- ▲ provide **copies** of nonaccredited learning records for all non-accredited learning activities claimed on your CPD log;
- provide a copy of your professional liability insurance policy;
- ▲ fulfill all audit requirements within 30 days of notification;
- make sure you're sending documents for the correct registration year.



Don't:

- ▼ send original documents;
- send copies of other supporting documentation such as exams, handouts, conference brochures, receipts;
- ask ACP to delete learning activities from your CPD log;
- alter course certificates in any way (e.g., strike out participant's name and write in another name);
- ▼ claim non-accredited learning activities that are not really "learning activities", such as golf tournaments, presentations to lay people, and the act of precepting students (you can claim the learning you do while precepting);
- claim continuing medical education programs as accredited learning.





Responding constructively

ACP recommends two types of assessments: self-assessment and external assessments. While these are very valuable tools, it is how you respond to the outcomes of assessments that makes the difference to your practice and your patients.

Using the R.E.S.P.O.N.D. method designed by Capital Health for patient interaction can be a good guide for your response to feedback from the college, peers, and patients.

Let's review.

R = Recognize the contributor's perspective

Everybody sees situations differently. Acknowledge what the person is experiencing and his/her reaction to it. Use the feedback to determine the completeness and accuracy of your self-assessment.

E = Establish a rapport with the contributor

- *Listen* and show that his/her feedback matters to you.
- Paraphrase what the person is saying to be sure that you understand what he/she means.

S = Single out the contributor's *real* issues

Ask questions to identify and clarify the specific things that the person is discussing. Make sure you are hearing the issues and not letting your defenses or emotions block your chances for growth and learning.

P = Provide information to the contributor about action to be taken

- Explain what steps you will take to develop the competency that has been identified as lacking.
- Be as specific as possible. This will help you plan and will also show the contributor that you value the input.

Operationalize the indicated plan of action

■ Follow through on the action(s) you described.

N = Notify the contributor of the action you have taken

■ This keeps you accountable to follow through on your action plan.

Discuss the feedback with others if indicated

- Clarify specific details as necessary.
- Find people who can support you in building your skills and developing your competencies. Mentoring isn't just for students!

Restricting my practice within my personal competence

There are two important checks to keep in mind when assessing your competence:

1. Competence is multifaceted and contextual

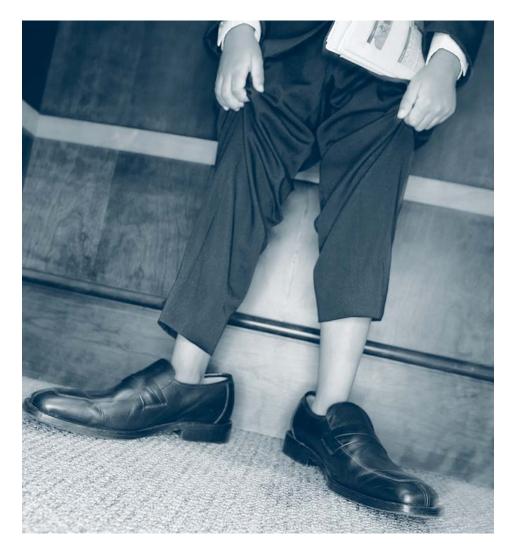
This means being competent in the psychomotor skills of one topic does not necessarily imply competence in the knowledge of that topic (and vice versa). Being competent in a specific area in one type of practice is not necessarily considered competent in another type of practice. For example, competencies around oncology in a

rural community pharmacy practice are probably at a different level than those needed in the Cross Cancer Centre pharmacy. Further, the competencies themselves may be different, e.g., sterile product preparation.

2. Confidence is not the same as competence

As discussed earlier, the inaccuracies of self-assessment are well-documented. We all have a hard time identifying and acknowledging weaknesses and knowledge gaps.

As with most things in life, the more you learn, the more you realize you don't know. Never put your patients or your reputation at risk by practicing outside of your personal competencies. Be confident in the skills and knowledge you have worked to develop, but always know that there is more to discover.



Keeping informed

There are many resources to help you plan for and carry out your professional development. The Continuing Competence section of ACP's website has an overview of the competence process, planning tools, links to learning sources, and a frequently asked questions page. Make it your first stop for all your competence questions.

Here are just a few other resources you may want to consider.

Planning resources

Start by reading the new guide to CPD – Navigating Your Continuing Professional Development – on the ACP website. Then open up your RxCEL Continuing Professional Development Plan or investigate the online version. If you're interested in more information, contact ACP's Competence Department for a copy of the CPE Office's print course RxCEL Continuing Professional Development – Expanding Opportunities for Professional Development.

Education resource information

Learning Links

https://pharmacists.ab.ca/nContinuing Competence/LearningLinks.aspx

The Learning Links section under *Continuing Competence* on the ACP website gives links for sites such as:

- American College of Clinical Pharmacy
- American Pharmacists Association
- American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
- Canadian Council on Continuing Education in Pharmacy
- Canadian Pharmacists Association
- Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists
- Medscape

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Keeping informed continued from page 11

- Pharmacy Gateway
- rxBriefCase

and many others. The list is by no means exhaustive, but it's a good place to start your search. Please note that the listing does not imply ACP endorsement.

Events

https://pharmacists.ab.ca/nNewsEvents/ Events.aspx

The Events section under News & Events on the ACP website provides information about upcoming educational events across the province and the country.

Alberta Pharmacists' Association (RxA)

www.rxa.ca/n_EducationEvents/default.aspx

The association continues to offer two professional development events each year, along with several short courses and the injections training program in a variety of locations across the province.

Canadian Council on Continuing Education in Pharmacy (CCCEP)

www.cccep.ca

Check out CCCEP's website for information on what CCCEP accreditation means, how the accreditation process assures relevant, accurate and unbiased information, and to search their database of accredited programs. Coming later this year will be a searchable database of accredited programs, including the NAPRA competency addressed and contact information for each program.

NAPRA's Model Standards of Practice

http://napra.ca/pages/Practice_ Resources/default.aspx

NAPRA offers a series of "Pharmacy Practice Resources" to assist practitioners in complying with the Model Standards of Practice for Canadian Pharmacists. Each chapter identifies a collection of currently available or developing tools and resources, and in some cases outlines pharmacists' success with their use. Other components include forms and articles where available, and references for further reading.

Practice Development, U of A Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

www.pharmacy.ualberta.ca/conted/

Formerly known as Continuing Pharmacy Education, this group offers comprehensive, practice-based learning experiences that allow you to immediately implement your learnings and develop your practice. Look for their updated website this month!



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