

Educational Program for Optimizing the Use of Pharmacy Information and Information Technology

Background

Pharmacy and pharmacist practice is rapidly changing from a drug distribution focus to expanded scopes of practice with a major emphasis on improving patient care and health outcomes. Information and information technology needs are also evolving to enable and support this change. Optimized use of health and pharmacy information, as well as information technology is considered a critical success factor for this shift. While Canadian pharmacy faculties currently provide education on information and information technology, few faculties have dedicated courses and materials about this important topic.

Project Overview

The Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada (AFPC) and Canada Health Infoway (CHI) are working together to develop, implement and evaluate a comprehensive national educational program that prepares undergraduate pharmacy students to optimize the use of pharmacy and health information and information technology. Key components of the project include background research, development and implementation of a national educational program (including learning and teaching aides and tools), establishment of a national pharmacy information technology graduate student award recognition and evaluation of the project.

Background research will be conducted including an extensive literature review and interviews with key informants. Through the background research, the following syntheses will be produced: information and information technology glossary / dictionary; information and information technology competency framework / competency assessment tools; and an inventory / assessment of established best practices in information and information technology use in pharmacy practice.

An on-line educational program is the centre piece of the initiative. The educational program will focus on core and advanced pharmacy practice and management principles as well as concepts for the optimal use of information and information technology. It is anticipated that the project will examine the following domains: value of information and technology in practice, key information technology management principles and concepts, assessing health information and technology, integration of pharmacy with other health care information, use of pharmacy and clinical decision support tools, pharmaceutical care documentation, use of social media in health care, change management, optimizing information technology management – for privacy / safety / effectiveness / efficiency, continuing professional development learning strategies. The most significant learning

domains will be prioritized and the selected domains will be used to focus content for the educational program. As the educational program has a laboratory component, coordination with existing provincial health information networks and private sector software suppliers will be pursued. Teaching guides will be developed for pharmacy faculty members and special educational sessions will be conducted for educators. All educational materials will be provided in both English and French.

The establishment of a University based national graduate student award recognition will initiate a process of developing future capacity for centres of excellence and for developing a potential faculty member who will specialize in pharmacy information technology use and management. It is anticipated that the graduate student would conduct research related to a component of this project as part of his/her educational program.

Project Timeline

This initiative will be undertaken in phases over a 2 year period, concluding in the fall of 2013.

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