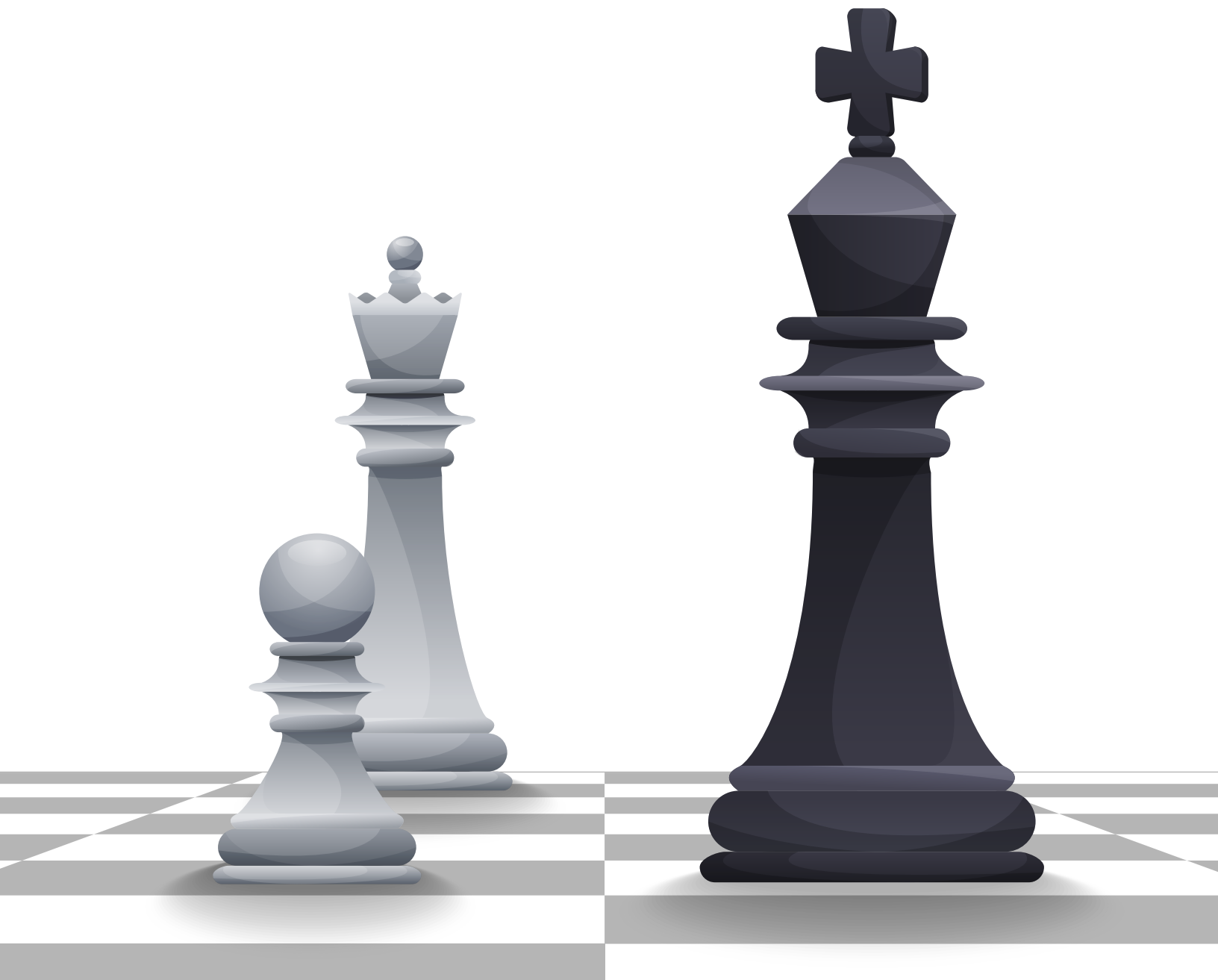




# 2021-25 Strategic plan



## OUR VISION

Healthy Albertans through excellence in pharmacy practice.

## OUR MISSION

The Alberta College of Pharmacy governs pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacies in Alberta to serve, support, and protect the public's health and well-being.

## OUR VALUES

The Alberta College of Pharmacy values

- **Integrity** - we are honest and demonstrate professional conduct and ethical decision-making.
- **Respect** - we invite diverse perspectives and seek to understand.
- **Transparency** - we have open and clear processes and engagement.
- **Accountability** - we accept responsibility for our decisions and actions.

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Email us at [info@abpharmacy.ca](mailto:info@abpharmacy.ca)

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# Message from the president and registrar

The possibilities for how a game of chess can unfold are seemingly limitless. Even after each player has made five moves, there are more than 69 trillion potential ways for the game to be played out. As staggering as that may seem, the game itself is made up of basic components—32 pieces and a 64-space board—and a simple goal: to bring down your opponent's king.

In pharmacy, opportunities and challenges can also seem limitless. Albertans and pharmacy teams are privileged to have opportunities greater than those in other jurisdictions due to the effort of practice and organizational leaders in the past. Additionally, the availability of pharmacy teams to meet public health, self care, and prescription drug treatment needs has been well recognized. This was experienced more than ever through pharmacy teams' response to COVID-19.

Still, ACP Council has observed that pharmacy practice in Alberta is consistently inconsistent. Council's strong desire is that patients have access to the pharmacy services they seek and that legislation has enabled. Patients do not always have the great experiences at their pharmacy that we aspire to. These successes and challenges have informed ACP's new five-year strategic plan (2021-2025).



Peter Macek



Greg Eberhart

In the end, we must be more confident that regulated members are ready and able to succeed by effectively responding to patients' health goals. This must occur in context with Alberta's health system, where patients consistently experience and benefit from the broad authorities pharmacy teams have. Therefore, our strategic plan takes us back to the basics. It focuses on ACP being better at

- assessing candidates prior to entering practice,
- preparing pharmacy licensees to understand and accept responsibility for their roles, and,
- identifying practices that present risk and initiating structured practice improvement efforts.

Our plan looks to the future, creating a legal framework more meaningful and relevant to new practice models and that provides improved processes and tools for regulating practice and pharmacy operations. It pursues opportunities for regulated members and ACP alike to have better access to, and to be more effective in using, information to enhance performance.

It is an aggressive plan. We welcome you to review its highlights and, more importantly, look forward to working with you to bring it to fruition. Achieving it will provide a solid foundation for regulated members and ACP in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Macek'.

Peter Macek  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Eberhart'.

Greg Eberhart  
Registrar

# The state of pharmacy practice in Alberta

## Understanding the present to effectively plan for the future.

The game of chess dates as far back as the 16th century. While little about the game has changed during the last 500 years, the strategies people use to play chess have evolved over time. It's much the same in pharmacy. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have always had the goal of providing safe and appropriate drug therapy to their patients. How they deliver patient care, however, has evolved immensely. This has been necessary to meet the changing expectations of patients, who have become increasingly enabled to participate in and make choices about their care, including when and how they receive it.

To better prepare the ACP and our regulated members to succeed in this continuously changing environment, the college has developed a five-year strategic plan. Central to the plan is enabling regulated members to perform their core responsibilities well.

In executing the strategic plan, ACP's core programs will be enhanced to provide better assurance that pharmacy professionals are prepared for success in Alberta's health system, creating more consistent patient experiences and expectations.

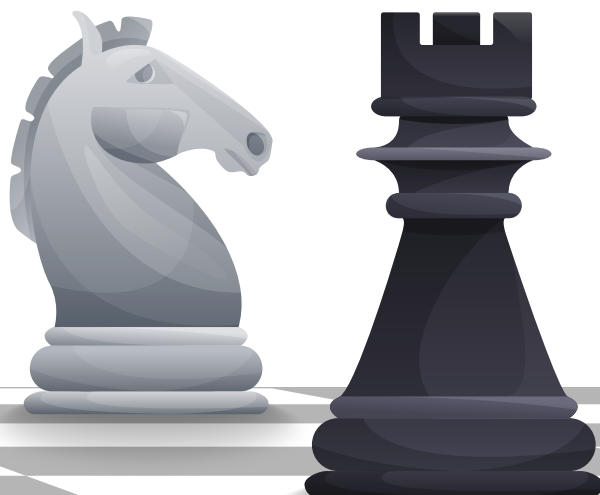
ACP's mission is to serve, support, and protect the public's health and wellbeing. In fulfilling its mandate within the *Health Professions Act*, ACP governs pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and the operation of licensed pharmacies by leading four core programs that continuously improve pharmacy practice:

- **Registration and Licensure** – ensures candidates meet minimum requirements prior to admission to ACP's register;
- **Continuing Competence** – supports behavioural change through continuing professional development, coaching, and mentoring;
- **Professional Practice** – monitors pharmacy practices and pharmacy operations to assess levels of compliance and performance; and
- **Complaints Resolution** – investigates, adjudicates, and resolves complaints about pharmacy practice.

Through support from these core programs, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians demonstrate responsibility when supporting Albertans to use drug therapy appropriately to achieve their health goals.

ACP's strategic plan will also work towards an updated legislative framework that is relevant and effective in a constantly changing health environment, where new technologies and other innovations invite new opportunities for patients and changing expectations of regulated members.

It is a data-driven world. A key component of ACP's strategic plan will see the college and pharmacy professionals become more proficient in collecting, analyzing, and using data to make more informed decisions that contribute to the health and well-being of Albertans.



## ***Current landscape***

To develop its five-year strategic plan, ACP Council examined how the college's vision of "Healthy Albertans through excellence in pharmacy practice" compared with today's reality. Council identified emerging trends in technology (e.g., artificial intelligence, automation), security and privacy, quality versus sustainability, an increasing erosion of public trust in health professionals, and changes in population and demographics. It also considered, among other things, the current states of ACP's standards of practice, entry-to-practice requirements, the definition of a pharmacy and the roles within pharmacy, and access to pharmacy services.

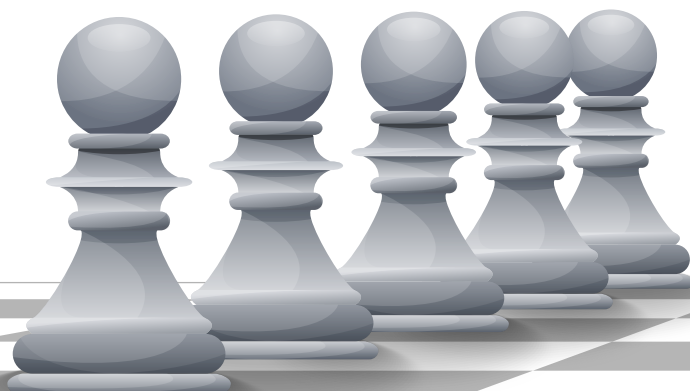
Council concluded that based on today's reality, the following three issues needed to be addressed:

1. **Inconsistency** – In general, the scope of practice that has been available for pharmacists in Alberta since 2007 is used inconsistently. This leads to inconsistent practice among pharmacists, inconsistent experiences by patients, and varying levels of quality and safety.
2. **New practice models** – Stimulated by technology and impacted by economics, we are seeing significant changes in pharmacy practice models and how pharmacy services are delivered. ACP recognizes that our regulatory structure must be able to accommodate change and regulate practice when these changes occur.
3. **Effective use of data** – ACP recognizes that the success of pharmacy professionals and the success of the college to effectively regulate pharmacy practice depend on our ability to translate data into information and knowledge that practitioners can use to improve. Improved access and interpretation of data can also help ACP identify and understand risks and trends during our decision-making processes.

## ***Strategic goals***

ACP's strategic plan results from our examination of and response to these issues. Council determined that ACP must renew its focus on its core responsibilities. That renewed focus is at the centre of each of the college's five goals to be achieved by the end of 2025:

- **Goal #1: All applicants are ready to practise pharmacy in Alberta's health system.**
- **Goal #2: There is a modern and relevant framework to regulate pharmacy practice.**
- **Goal #3: Licensees are qualified and held responsible for practice in their pharmacy.**
- **Goal #4: Data intelligence is used by registrants and the college to make more informed decisions.**
- **Goal #5: Registrants identified as not being able to meet practice expectations demonstrate practice improvement.**



## ***Keys to success***

To achieve these goals, ACP must consider the following:

### **Continued focus on core mandate**

- ACP needs to focus on continuing to improve delivery on its core mandate, while at the same time implementing its new strategic goals. This includes continuously evaluating and prioritizing what we do. Strong planning, flexibility, and responsiveness will all be required by both staff and Council.

### **Registrant and stakeholder engagement**

- ACP must successfully communicate with registrants and stakeholders who, each in their own context, will want to understand what is being proposed, why, how it will impact them, and what is expected of them.

### **Partnerships**

- Leveraging resources and expertise through strong partnerships will be important to ACP achieving its strategic goals and ACP's contribution to and impact on the broader health system.

### **Education and training**

- ACP's registrants and others must have access to education and training that is acceptable to the college, in the right form at the right time.

### **Access to information**

- ACP and its registrants require access to timely, quality information to make informed decisions in a knowledge-based society.

### **Staff resourcing**

- The administrative team is amongst ACP's most important assets. One of ACP's critical success factors is to be a workplace of choice. This means investing in the right people, to create the best team, and support them with the necessary resources to perform at a high level.

### **Operations and infrastructure**

- New initiatives mean that ACP needs to invest in its current and evolving infrastructure, particularly information management systems and technology.

### **Flexible, agile, and proactive**

- ACP operates in a dynamic and changing environment. ACP will need to be proactive, agile, and focused to effectively anticipate and respond to changes and achieve its goals.



# Beyond the comfort zone

## Carlene Oleksyn and her team have flipped the traditional pharmacy practice model.

Carlene Oleksyn's pharmacy is different than most community pharmacies. She has turned the traditional pharmacy model upside down at the Mint + Health Meridian Pharmacy in Stony Plain by putting the pharmacists right up front to greet you and talk about what brings you to the pharmacy as soon as you walk in.

The pharmacist uses this time to assess each patient and the appropriateness of their prescribed drug therapy, identify any potential drug-related problems, and, if the drug therapy is deemed appropriate, counsel the patient on how to take the medication and what results or side effects they should be aware of. This is all done before any drugs are dispensed.

"In a more traditional model where the pharmacist is involved on the back end of the workflow, they don't have an up-front conversation with the patient," said Carlene. "An assessment often means they're not asking the patient questions; they're assessing the appropriateness of the prescription based on the computer profile and the prescription in front of them. If the pharmacist picks up a problem while counselling the patient at the end of the process, they've got to go through the whole system over again. It's not efficient."

Carlene calls this first interaction between the pharmacist and the patient the clinical check of her two-check system. The second step—the technical check—is performed by pharmacy technicians. Once a pharmacist has signed off on the clinical check (assessment has been completed and the drug therapy has been deemed appropriate for the patient), the pharmacy technician will ensure the drug being dispensed to the patient is the correct drug in the correct container, with the right label. Pharmacists are not present during the technical check—this is the pharmacy technicians' responsibility.

"Our technicians feel they are equal partners with our pharmacists as healthcare professionals," said Carlene. "The technicians engage with patients about technical explanations of prescriptions such as showing patients how to split their tablets in half or how to use an inhaler or a blood glucose monitor. This allows the technicians to form relationships with patients, which can be rewarding. They feel valued and that they are making a difference by using their professional skills."

The workflow at Carlene's pharmacy forces pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to step out of their comfort zones to provide optimal care.

"It's easy to be comfortable and keep doing the same things, but it's so rewarding to get out of that comfort zone and do things that are innovative," she said. "When new pharmacists come into our practice, they tell me the way we run our pharmacy reignites their passion for the profession. I love to hear that! It's renewed our enthusiasm for pharmacy."

Carlene is encouraged to see that part of ACP's strategic plan is to work towards a modern and relevant practice framework that supports practice innovation through legislation and standards.

"Pharmacy practice has changed so much in the last 10 years, so an updated legislative framework is so important to provide guidance and appropriate boundaries, while at the same time allowing for freedom to be able to grow our practices and be innovative to provide the best care possible to our community," she said.

Carlene also feels the collection, analysis, and use of data to make more informed decisions is critical to pharmacy practice, not only to help patients achieve better outcomes, but also uncover the value pharmacy teams bring to the health system.

"We do all these things on a daily basis—we just do them—but there's no data collection about how we contribute to the healthcare system or the impact we have on patients because we just keep going and we keep doing them," said Carlene. "Being able to have a way to collect that data would be very important."





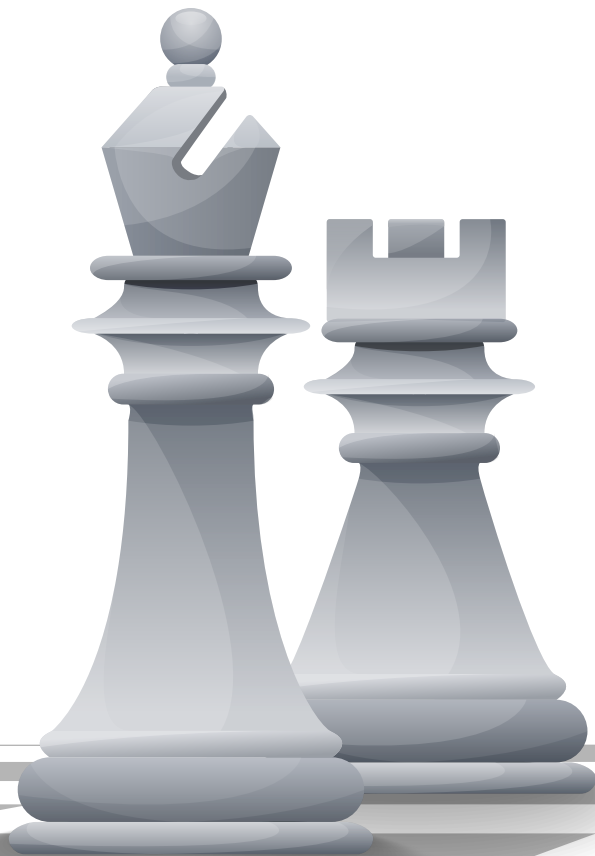
# Our goals

## ACP's priorities for the next five years.

From 2021 to 2025, ACP will renew its focus on its core responsibilities in working to achieve its five strategic goals. In setting the goals, Council focused on ensuring that each goal was not only achievable but also within ACP's control to achieve. In other words, Council strived to develop goals that put ACP in the driver's seat and not overly dependent on external factors.

Each goal comes with a set of objectives—specific, actionable targets that will be pursued within specific timeframes to contribute to the overall goal being met.

During its strategic planning, Council also articulated what success should look and feel like as each specific goal is achieved.





# All applicants are ready to practise pharmacy in Alberta's health system

All applicants to ACP must be able to demonstrate competencies, values, and professional behaviours important to pharmacy teams' roles and responsibilities in Alberta's health system.

One of the reasons that pharmacy practice in Alberta is "consistently inconsistent" is the varying levels of preparedness of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to practise in Alberta's health system. Once approved for the clinical pharmacist register or pharmacy technician register, all pharmacy professionals must be able to practise within the Alberta health system, and understand and meet the professional expectations of the individuals they serve.

## *Key objectives*

- Standardized evaluation occurs throughout and at conclusion of learning and structured practical training.
- Provisional pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are evaluated in a manner that assures the college's confidence in their readiness to independently fulfill their scope of practice in a safe, effective, and ethical manner.

## *ACP initiatives*

- Redesign the Structured Practical Training (SPT) programs for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to enable standardized evaluation throughout to determine candidates' readiness to practice independently in Alberta's health system.
- Develop training and evaluation programs for preceptors who participate in SPT.
- Develop bridging programs to support the learning of internationally trained pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

## **What success looks like in 2025**

Provisional pharmacists and pharmacy technicians demonstrate acceptable clinical, technical, communication, and critical thinking skills; and cultural awareness of pharmacy practice in Alberta's health system at entry to practice.



# There is a modern and relevant framework to regulate pharmacy practice

A modern and relevant legislative framework will enable practice innovations, balanced with necessary authorities for the college to ensure practice is conducted in a manner that is safe and in the public's best interest.

As pharmacy practice—and the delivery of health care in general—continue to evolve at a rapid pace, so must the regulation of healthcare. ACP must be able to adapt to new and anticipated practice models, which are often stimulated by technology, competition, and patient expectations.

## *Key objectives*

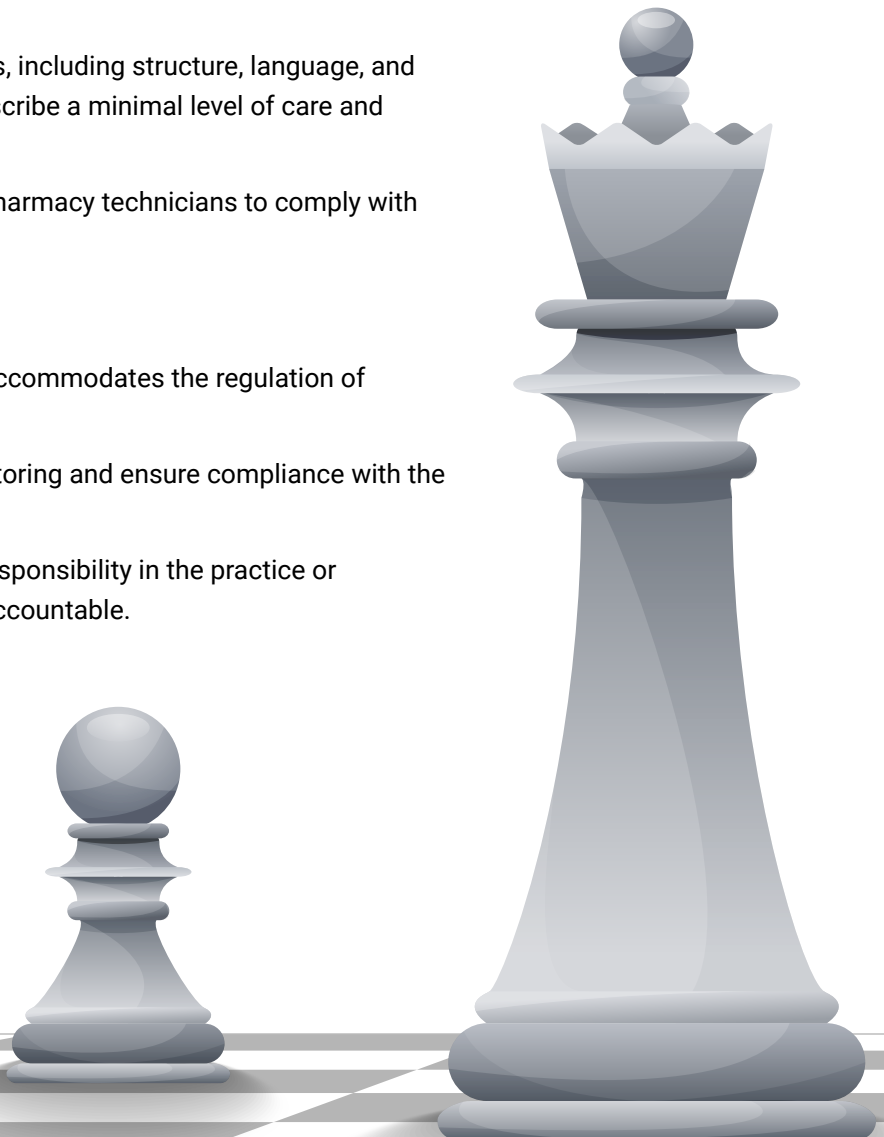
- The legal framework authorizes ACP to establish rules to regulate new roles and practice models.
- ACP is able to prescribe a range of effective interventions when it is determined that competence, standards, or ethical responsibilities are not being met.
- Standards are current, relevant, clear, concise, and appropriately balance inputs, processes, and outputs.

## *ACP initiatives*

- Work with key stakeholders to develop a legal framework that accommodates new roles and pharmacy practice models, and provides relevant, timely, and cost-effective corrective alternatives that can be prescribed when deficiencies are identified.
- Develop a model design for standards, including structure, language, and drafting principles. Standards will describe a minimal level of care and operations.
- Orient and enable pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to comply with the new standards.

## What success looks like in 2025

- A modernized legal framework that accommodates the regulation of innovative roles and practice models.
- Reliable indicators that support monitoring and ensure compliance with the modernized legal framework.
- Individuals having an authority and responsibility in the practice or management of pharmacy are held accountable.



# Licensees are qualified and held responsible for practice in their pharmacy

Licensees are responsible for the operation of, and practices in, their pharmacies. This includes consistent demonstration of ethical and professional behaviours that are person-centred and committed to improving the health of individuals, families, and their communities.

A consistently high-quality level of practice across pharmacies in Alberta depends on the competency and leadership of licensees. Licensees should be able to not only practise person-centred care at or above ACP's standards and code of ethics, but also coach, mentor, and inspire their teams to do the same. If standards and ethics are not being met consistently at their pharmacy, licensees need to be held accountable.

## *Key objectives*

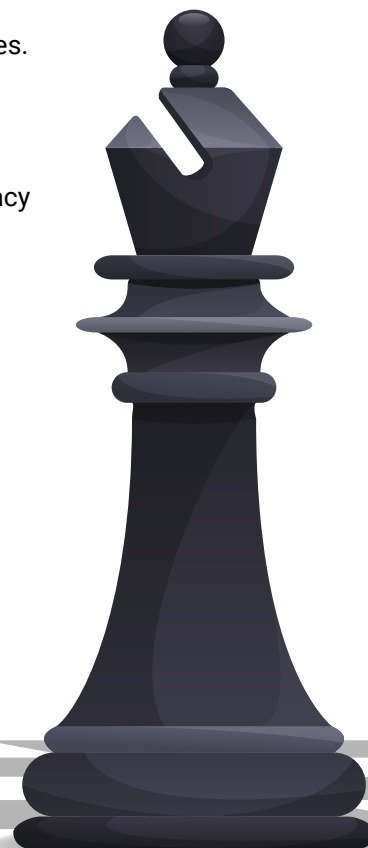
- Licensee applicants are evaluated to ensure they can meet their commitment to their responsibilities as a licensee prior to being issued a license and are assessed regularly thereafter.
- Licensees model professional behaviours, both clinically and operationally, expected in high performing pharmacies.

## *ACP initiatives*

- Define the core competencies and responsibilities of licensees and include these in the Licensee Education Program.
- Develop methods to evaluate licensees based on performance indicators.
- Develop indicators for standardized performance of licensees.
- Develop methods to hold licensees responsible for the level of pharmacy practice performance at their pharmacy.

## What success looks like in 2025

- Licensees lead by example in delivering excellent pharmacy services.
- Licensees motivate, empower, and support all pharmacy team members.
- Licensees acknowledge and fulfill their duty to ensure their pharmacy services meet the needs of individuals, families, and their communities.



# Data intelligence is used by registrants and the college to make more informed decisions

The success of the college and its regulated members depends on becoming more proficient in collecting, analyzing, and using relevant data to make informed, knowledgeable, and timely decisions. The ability to use data from multiple sources in an informed and timely manner is important to meeting the changing needs and expectations of individuals, families, and our communities.

## *Key objectives*

- Relevant and meaningful data intelligence is available to registrants and ACP.
- Information collected through centralized reporting of pharmacy errors will enable pharmacy teams to improve their practices.
- Standardized reports addressing pharmacy team performance will be provided to pharmacy teams.
- Quantitative and qualitative governance indicators (Governance Matrix) will be available to Council to monitor ACP performance and make informed policy decisions.

## *ACP initiatives*

- Collect, use, secure, and disclose data via an ACP data governance policy.
- Contextualize and present data in a meaningful and usable way that meets the users' needs.
- Develop a program for documenting, collecting, and analyzing medication incidents.
- Define performance indicators of effective pharmacy teams.
- Prioritize meaningful performance indicators arising from ACP's strategic plan and the college's core programs, taking into consideration data availability.
- Collect, monitor, and report data related to each indicator to Council on a semi-annual basis.

## What success looks like in 2025

- ACP has data intelligence about the quality of pharmacy practice and addresses risk where it exists.
- Registrants use data intelligence to prioritize and support improvements in patient care.
- ACP uses data intelligence to predict trends, identify risks, and inform its priorities.



# Registrants identified as not being able to meet practice expectations demonstrate practice improvement

The college's ability to serve, support, and protect the public's health and well-being depends on the quality of care provided by pharmacy professionals. Where it is determined that a registrant does not meet the practice expectations of the college, the registrant must demonstrate practice improvement to a level acceptable to the college. Improved and more consistent pharmacy practices will better meet the needs, and shape the expectations, of Albertans.

## *Key objectives*

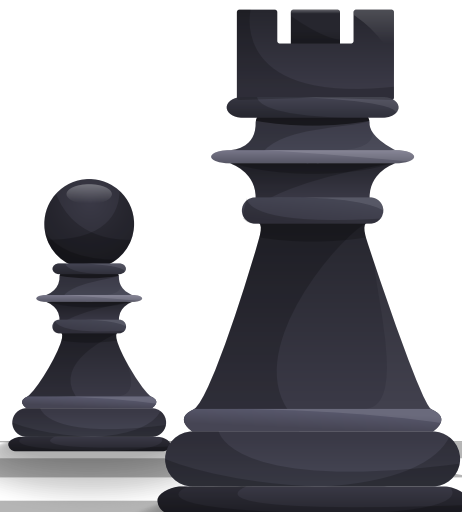
- Registrants vulnerable to practice failure and potential public risk are identified through validated indicators and processes.
- Registrants vulnerable to practice failure and potential public risk participate in practice improvement initiatives prescribed by ACP.
- Registrants completing practice improvement are evaluated to determine their readiness to practise consistently to expectations.

## *ACP initiatives*

- Develop processes to monitor and identify indicators of risk in registrants' practices.
- Differentiate indicators of competence drift versus indicators of poor performance.
- Design processes to respond to factors and behaviours attributable to practice failure and vulnerability.
- Develop a practice improvement program founded on a defined philosophy, principles, and scope.
- Continuously evaluate registrants participating in the practice improvement program, including a final evaluation prior to exiting the program, designed to demonstrate their ability to practise to expectations.

## What success looks like in 2025

Provisional pharmacists and pharmacy technicians demonstrate acceptable clinical, technical, communication, and critical thinking skills; and cultural awareness of pharmacy practice in Alberta's health system at entry to practice.





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