

## Chapter 24

# Saskatchewan Health Authority—Administering Medication in Weyburn and Estevan Hospitals

### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

The Saskatchewan Health Authority is responsible for administering medication to its patients in Weyburn and Estevan hospitals.

As of November 2019, the Authority implemented our last outstanding recommendation about staff in these hospitals consistently documenting key information about patients (e.g., patient weight) to support decisions about medication prescribed in hospitals.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes our follow-up of management's actions on a recommendation we originally made in 2013.

In 2013, we assessed processes the Sun Country Regional Health Authority (amalgamated into the Saskatchewan Health Authority in 2017) used to manage and administer medications in its two district hospitals—Weyburn General Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital in Estevan.<sup>1</sup> We made five recommendations for improvement. By December 31, 2017, the Saskatchewan Health Authority significantly improved its management and administration of medications at the Weyburn General and Estevan hospitals by implementing four of the five recommendations.<sup>2</sup>

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Authority's progress toward meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. The Authority's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To perform our follow-up audit on the outstanding recommendation, we discussed with management actions taken, reviewed current policies, tested a sample of 30 patient files, and consulted with a pharmacist.

### 3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION

This section sets out the recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at November 30, 2019, and the Saskatchewan Health Authority's actions up to that date.

<sup>1</sup> 2013 Report – Volume 2, Chapter 31. [auditor.sk.ca/publications/public\\_reports](http://auditor.sk.ca/publications/public_reports).

<sup>2</sup> 2018 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 30. [auditor.sk.ca/publications/public\\_reports](http://auditor.sk.ca/publications/public_reports).



### 3.1 Patient Medication Profiles Recorded and Reviewed

***We recommended Sun Country Regional Health Authority consistently complete patient medication profiles by documenting patients' weight.***

(2013 Report – Volume 2, p. 244, Recommendation 4; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 15, 2015)

**Status**—Implemented

The Authority consistently records and reviews patient medication profiles before administering medication to patients within its Weyburn and Estevan hospitals. A medication profile includes a patient's name, gender, age, known allergies, and a comprehensive list of medications taken in the past.

The Authority's work standard *Best Possible Medication History* requires hospital staff to document the height and weight of patients to support a patient's medication profile.

In addition, the Authority requires the hospital pharmacist to review the dosage of medications physicians prescribe in a hospital prior to the hospital administering medications to a patient. This second check ensures the medication and dosage make sense given each patient's history and status.

Patient weight, while important, is not the sole determinant in administering appropriate medication doses to patients. Many medications have a fixed dosage amount dependent on whether the patient is an adult (age dependent versus weight dependent).

Up to November 2018, through its medication reconciliation audits, Authority staff in Weyburn and Estevan hospitals checked whether staff recorded a patient's weight. In these medication reconciliation audits, staff tested a sample of files, and used a detailed audit template. Its audit results found staff at these hospitals properly recorded patient weight between 70% and 100% of the time (on average 90% of the time). The Authority discontinued checking whether staff in these hospitals recorded patient weights because of the high staff compliance rate.

For 22 of 30 patient files we tested for files selected from both hospitals (for patients admitted since fall 2018), staff clearly recorded patient weight. For each of the eight files without a patient weight record, the file contained sufficient information about profile factors (e.g., age, patient condition) to enable the hospital pharmacist to adequately review the patient's medication dosage amount.

For all 30 patient files we tested, every file contained evidence of a pharmacist reviewing prescribed medication dosages prior to their administration.