

Advocacy: CSHP's Renewed Vision for Hospital Pharmacy Excellence

Jody Ciuffo

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Advocacy is an integral component of your professional association—that's what Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists (CSHP) members tell us each year in our national membership surveys. Members say that advocacy is one of the top-three core values they associate with CSHP, and in 2021, 99% of our survey respondents indicated that “advising government on legislation and public policy” was an essential or acceptable role for CSHP. Eighty-nine per cent of 2021 respondents felt that it was essential for CSHP to act as the voice of hospital pharmacy in Canada.

As CSHP's CEO, I hear you loud and clear. CSHP has always engaged in advocacy, and we're proud to have built close working relationships with government agencies and stakeholders across the country. That said, in our 2020–2023 Strategic Plan, CSHP focused on achieving sustainability as an organization; we strengthened our foundation by modernizing information systems, enhancing our financial sustainability, and investing in human resources. Now, as we prepare to transition into a new strategic planning phase in 2023 and beyond, you'll see CSHP focus more attention on hospital pharmacy advocacy. Our goal is to make CSHP the most effective voice for our profession, leveraging thoughtful strategy and solid evidence to achieve meaningful change.

“Advocacy” is a term we hear frequently, but what does effective advocacy really require? Often, we associate advocacy with raising public awareness about the value of hospital pharmacy teams, perhaps through initiatives like Pharmacy Appreciation Month. Public education and recognition for what we do is important. More critical is advocacy targeted directly at laws, regulations, policies, and funding so that we can bring about systemic change. We have expertise and evidence that will have a great and lasting impact on patient care across the country.

As the national voice of hospital pharmacy, CSHP aims to provide clear, focused communication with Canadian legislators, regulators, and policy-makers. We will continue to work closely with Health Canada and expand our reach to other departments and agencies across all levels of government. This way, hospital pharmacy expertise can shape policy from its very germination, to create optimal outcomes for our patients and to support excellence in the profession. Effective advocacy also means articulating the value of hospital pharmacy to decision makers when it comes to funding opportunities, so that the knowledge and innovation of hospital pharmacy teams can shine to their greatest potential. In these efforts, we aim to identify clear and precise objectives, to support evidence-based positions, and to highlight issues in which hospital pharmacy teams offer unique expertise.

As we prepare for our next strategic plan, I look forward to working alongside you to achieve meaningful, lasting change in our health systems. Our vision for CSHP's legacy and impact is ambitious, but we are uniquely positioned as a united profession to enhance the use of safe, effective medication in Canada. Together, we can make real change.



Jody Ciuffo, MBA, is Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists.