



St. John Ambulance ~~Saint-Jean~~

National Headquarters **Siège national**
312 Laurier Avenue, East 312, avenue Laurier est
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6P6 Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6P6

10 January 2000

MEMORANDUM

To: St. John Ambulance Brigade Patient Care Providers

Re: *Use of Prescription Drugs by Brigade Members*

Questions have been raised about the value of having a Brigade Unit maintaining, under the care and control of an RN, a lock-box with a supply of prescription drugs. The intention is that the drugs are available for use by an MD in the event an emergency occurs in which the particular drug is required.

The following concerns were raised:

- Where will the drugs come from
- Who will ensure the drugs are replaced before their expiry date
- Issues of cost
- Issues of delegation of acts and/or prescriptions and responsibility

Based on feedback from consultations, which addressed the stated concerns, it is recommended that a Brigade Unit can maintain a lock-box with a supply of prescription drugs within the following parameters:

- In situations where the Brigade Unit is called upon *regularly* to events where physicians are present and can be called upon to give care beyond that of a first responder
- In the above situations, this program remains an option
- The drugs are ordered by a physician
- Expired drugs are discarded under the direct supervision of a physician
- Steps are taken to encourage local hospitals to donate the required drugs
- Responsibility for the drugs is delegated to an MD or RN, who is always present at duties or easily on call, and the lock-box of drugs is under their direct control
- The box is kept safely locked in a secure location between duties. During this time, it remains the responsibility of the professional (MD or RN) to whom responsibility has been delegated

~~Nancy Terwiel~~
National Commissioner