GOVERNMENT

Health Canada Warning, July 9, 2008. **Ratio-Morphine tablets recalled in Canada due to risk of accidental overdose.**

Health Canada is warning consumers not to use the prescription drug ratio-Morphine SR in 15 mg, 30 mg and 60 mg strength. Some tablets may contain more morphine than the label indicates, exposing patients to the potential risk of accidental overdose.

Health Canada advises consumers currently using ratio-Morphine SR at the 15 mg, 30 mg, or 60 mg strength not to take these products and to contact their treating physician immediately to obtain a suitable alternative product for their medical condition.

Consumers should also return the product to their pharmacist for safe disposal.

Health Canada, Natural Health Products Directorate, June 24, 2008. **New approach to compendial reviews.**

The National Health Products Directorate has adopted a new approach to the review of compendial Product Licence Applications (PLAs). Effective June 24, 2008, Information Request Notices will no longer be issued for deficient compendial PLAs.

The new compendial review approach will only apply to compendial PLA's received after the effective date of June 24, 2008.

Alberta Health Services, July 8, 2008. **Alberta Health Services moves toward one provincial health system to increase patient access and enhance care.**

Alberta Health Services, the new provincial system that has accountability for all health delivery, announced a restructuring plan that will create one coordinated, unified operation. In creating the new provincial health system, several top administrators and CEOs in health regions and boards are leaving their respective organizations. In the new system, there will be a Continuum of Care Division with two areas, Urban and Rural.

Alberta Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, July 3, 2008. **Series of unfortunate errors leads to breach of Health Information Act.**

An investigation by the Information and Privacy Commissioner's Office into the erroneous disclosure of health information has resulted in a number of recommendations for information management companies and HIA custodians.
B.C. Ministry of Health Services, July 3, 2008.  **Expanded screening to improve health of B.C. babies.**

The British Columbia government is increasing the number of tests at birth to screen for 19 disorders, up from six disorders.  **Backgrounder**

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, July 2, 2008.  **More access to family health care means reduced wait times.**

A new report from the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences concludes that not having a family doctor leads to more emergency room visits for people who have chronic diseases.  On April 23rd, the government announced that improving access to family health care and reducing emergency room wait times are its two most important health care priorities over the next four years.

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, July 2, 2008.  **Three new cancer drugs now available in Ontario.**

Ontario is investing $50 million to give cancer patients better treatment opinions with three new drugs - including Avastin for the treatment of colorectal cancer.  Sprycel and Altima both provide new options for patients who have not had success with initial cancer drug systems.

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, June 26, 2008. **Ontario establishes new College of Traditional Chinese Medicine.**

Ontario has appointed a 15-member transitional council to oversee the practises and services of traditional Chinese medicine practitioners and acupuncturists.  Established under the *Traditional Chinese Medicine Act, 2006*, the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine will make traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture services safer by ensuring that only regulated and qualified practitioners who are accountable to a regulatory body may deliver services.

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, June 24, 2008. **Ontario announces intent to appoint supervisor at Kingston General Hospital.**

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care notified Kingston General Hospital of his intent to recommend that a supervisor be appointed for the hospital.  The minister’s actions were prompted by the findings and recommendations of a report prepared by KGH Investigator, Graham Scott.

**ASSOCIATIONS**

Ontario Nurses’ Association/ CUPE / OPSEU / SEIU, July 8, 2008. **Long-term care needs enforceable standards, not vague reports.**

With fresh revelations that over 60 per cent of long-term care homes violate provincial standards, unions representing long-term care workers called for enforceable minimum care standards of 3.5 hours of hands-on care.
Ontario Nurses' Association, June 25, 2008. **Ontario Nurses' Association challenges Rouge Valley lay-offs.**

The Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) has filed an application for judicial review of the decision made by Rouge Valley Health System's board of directors to close its in-patient mental health facilities at Rouge Valley Ajax Pickering Hospital and eliminate 220 union staff positions over the next three years.

**NEWS SOURCES**

CBC.ca, July 10, 2008. Families launch $50M proposed class action after *C. difficile* outbreak.

Patients and their families have filed a $50 million proposed class-action lawsuit against an Ontario hospital where 177 patients contracted *c. difficile*, according to one of their lawyers.


An investigation by Canadian Press found that the majority of Ontario's nursing homes have failed to meet the basic standards set out by the province to preserve the rights of elderly residents. Just over 60 per cent of homes across Ontario have been cited for violating some of the standards.

CBC.ca, July 3, 2008. 'Horror stories' from Ontario nursing homes worry ombudsman.

The "horror stories" about shocking conditions into the province's nursing homes have prompted Ontario Ombudsman Andre Marin to prepare for an investigation into whether the government is doing enough to ensure the safety and dignity of elderly residents.

**ARTICLES/REPORTS**

Health Canada, Natural Health Products Directorate, **NHPD Monthly Communiqué, 3(7), July 2008.**

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, July 3, 2008. **Health Services Enhancement Bulletin.**

The first in a series of bulletins includes updates on a number of subjects, including: physician assistants, community health services and planning for construction at St. Michael's Hospital, Mount Sinai Hospital and Toronto East General Hospital.

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, July 2008. **Results-based Plan Briefing Book 2008-2009.**

The government must continue to make key improvements in two major priority areas: reducing wait times with a special focus on emergency departments and delivering quality family health care for all Ontarians.

Canadian Institute for Health Information, June 25, 2008. **Wait time priority procedures continue to increase.**

A new study by the Canadian Institute for Health Information found that over a two-year period, Canadian patients outside Quebec underwent almost 60,000 additional surgical procedures in priority areas targeted for wait time reductions.
Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, July 2008. **The Impact of Not Having a Primary Care Physician Among People with Chronic Conditions: ICES Investigative Report.**

This report examines specific health system impacts related to Ontarians with chronic health conditions who did not have a primary care physician at the time they were surveyed.

Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, June 26, 2008. **CT/MRI scan study suggests some tests are overprescribed.**

Based on findings from Ontario's Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, scientists conclude that CT/MRI tests could be performed less often for some patients.

**Canadian Medical Association Journal, 179(1), July 1, 2008.**

Includes "Protecting global health security through the International Health Regulations: requirements and challenges."

**LEGISLATION**

**Ontario**

**O. Reg. 172/08** makes amendments to a General regulation under the *Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act*, including amendments to definitions of terms.

**O. Reg. 173/08** makes amendments to another General regulation under the *Drugs and Pharmacies Regulation Act*, including adding a definition of "dispensary."

Our National Health Industry Practice Group is dedicated to providing comprehensive and integrated legal services to health industry clients. For more information about our group, visit our website at www.millerthomson.com or contact one of our regional contacts:

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