Expired Drug Removal Policy

This document is prepared by www.pharmasist.ca

1. Purpose

This policy ensures that expired and soon-to-expire medications are identified, removed from active pharmacy stock, segregated safely, and returned or destroyed according to pharmacy procedures.

Monthly Expiry Check

- All drugs, including OTC products, are checked during the last week of every month.
- All pharmacy shelves, dispensary stock, OTC sections, and storage areas must be reviewed.
- Any drug expiring in less than one month must be removed from active stock.

Removal Rule

- Remove drugs expiring in less than one month from pharmacy shelves.
- Do not dispense medication if the patient cannot finish the full supply before expiry.
- Removed products must not be returned to active stock unless expiry status is verified.

2. Handling of Expired or Near-Expired Medications

- Products may be returned to the wholesaler when eligible.
- Products not eligible for return must be destroyed through standard medication destruction procedures.
- Products for destruction must be sent through Stericycle or the pharmacy's approved disposal provider.
- Expired medications may be stored temporarily in the designated expired medication section in the dispensary.
- The expired medication section must be clearly separated from usable pharmacy stock.

Sticker System

- **Red sticker:** expires in 2 months.
- **Yellow sticker:** expires in 3 months.
- Stickered products require closer monitoring during monthly expiry checks.
- Sticker placement must not cover drug name, strength, lot number, DIN, or expiry date.

Dispensing Check

- Pharmacists must check expiry before dispensing.
- The supplied quantity must be usable before the medication expiry date.
- Special attention is required for 90-day and 100-day supplies.
- Short-dated products should be avoided when the full treatment period extends beyond expiry.

3. Narcotics, Controlled Drugs, and Targeted Substances

- Expired narcotics, controlled drugs, and targeted substances must be documented using the Narcotic Destruction Log.
- They must be destroyed according to the pharmacy's Narcotic Destruction Procedure.
- Expired controlled substances may be stored temporarily in a separate expired section inside the narcotic safe.
- Inventory must be removed from the pharmacy system when the product is moved to the expired controlled-substance section.
- Documentation must clearly show the drug name, strength, quantity, date removed, and staff involved.

4. Staff Workflow

- Assign staff to check designated sections during the last week of each month.
- Apply red or yellow stickers to soon-to-expire products based on the expiry timeline.
- Remove products expiring in less than one month.
- Separate regular expired drugs from expired controlled substances.
- Prepare eligible returns to wholesaler.
- Send non-returnable products for safe destruction.
- Document all controlled-substance removals and destructions.

5. Manager Review

The pharmacy manager or designated pharmacist should review the monthly expiry process, confirm that expired stock has been removed, verify that controlled-substance documentation is complete, and ensure that destruction or return procedures are followed.