



# CAO position statement on Prescription Medication Labeling

## Policy Issue

The legibility of medication labelling is a concern for all Canadians. Labels must be easy to read to help ensure patients take their medications appropriately and avoid medication errors. Older adults are more likely to be affected, as many have visual function decrease and higher rates of medication use.

## Policy Position

The CAO supports the use of Health Canada's *Good Label and Package Practices Guide for Prescription Drugs* by all stakeholders involved in developing and producing medication labels and packaging. CAO urges Health Canada to further protect the health and safety of Canadians by putting these recommendations into regulation, similar to the current Food and Drug Regulation.

The CAO encourages the use of large print labels wherever possible. When this is not possible, a larger font "duplicate label" printed on paper stock should be provided.

The CAO encourages consistent layout of information by all labelling companies.

The CAO encourages the use of uniform labeling utilizing sans serif fonts, upper and lowercase lettering (NOT ALL CAPS), bold typeface for patient content, and black lettering on white non-gloss labels.

## Conclusion

The Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) supports measures that make the information contained on medication labels more legible and accessible. The practices outlined in Health Canada's *Good Label and Package Practices Guide for Prescription Drugs* should be followed as a positive step toward safer prescription medication labeling.

-Developed February 2017

## References:

1. CNIB. Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines. Accessed online December 21, 2016 at: <https://www.cnib.ca/sites/default/files/2020-08/Clear%20Print%20Guidelines%202020.pdf>
2. Health Canada. 2016. Good Label and Package Practices Guide for Prescription Drugs. Accessed online December 21, 2016 at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/reports-publications/medeffect-canada/good-label-package-practices-guide-prescription-drugs-profile/guidance-document.html>
3. Institute for Safe Medication Practices. Principles of Designing a Medication Label for Community and Mail Order Pharmacy. Accessed online December 21, 2016 at: <https://www.ismp.org/tools/guidelines/labelFormats/comments/default.asp> Includes minimum 12-point font for patient name, drug name, and specific dose
4. Leat, S., Ahrens, K., Krishnamoorthy, A., Gold, D., Rojas-Fernandez, C. 2014. The legibility of prescription medication labelling in Canada: Moving from pharmacy-centred to patient-centred labels. Canadian Pharmacists Journal 147(3): 179-187. Accessed online December 21, 2016 at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4025884/> Includes minimum guideline of 12-point print size for all labels