

appendix **D**

Canadian Drug Laws and Standards

Two national laws, with their amendments, regulate drug-related standards and practices. The Health Protection Branch of the Department of National Health and Welfare is responsible for administering and enforcing the laws, which are described below.

The Food and Drugs Act, initially passed in 1953 and amended periodically since then, regulates the manufacture, distribution, advertising, labeling, and use of drugs. Specific provisions:

- Empower the government to control the marketing of drugs according to proof of safety and effectiveness
- Require that drugs comply with the standards under which the drugs are approved for sale or the standards listed in “specific pharmacopeiae”
- Direct the government to supervise the manufacturing processes of some drugs
- Classify drugs (eg, antihypertensives, antimicrobials, hormones) that require a prescription and specify that refills must be designated on the original prescription and obtained within 6 months (Schedule F)
- Specify symbols to be placed on containers of the different classifications of drugs
- Require proof of appropriate drug release from oral dosage formulations
- Prohibit advertising of prescription and controlled drugs to the public
- Prohibit the sale of contaminated, adulterated, or unsafe drugs
- Establish requirements for labeling
- Prohibit false, misleading, or deceptive labeling of drug products

The Narcotic Control Act, originally passed in 1961 and amended periodically since then, restricts the sale, posses-

sion, and use of opiates, cocaine, marijuana, and methadone. Additional provisions:

- Restrict possession of the above drugs to authorized people
- Require people possessing the drugs to keep them in a secure place, maintain strict dispensing records, and promptly report any thefts or other losses
- Require prescriptions for dispensing narcotics
- Require that containers with prescribed narcotics be labeled with the symbol N
- Specify four levels of controlled drugs. The first level, narcotics, includes single drugs and preparations containing cocaine, codeine, heroin, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, methadone, morphine, oxycodone, and pentazocine. The second level, controlled drugs or Schedule G, includes non-narcotic prescription drugs, the use of which is restricted to treatment of certain disorders (eg, amphetamines, methylphenidate, pentobarbital, and secobarbital). The third level restricts anabolic steroids, amobarbital, phenobarbital, diethylpropion, and nalbuphine. The fourth level (Schedule H) includes substances with no recognized medicinal uses (eg, hallucinogens such as LSD).

Nurses in Canada are governed by these national laws; there also may be local and provincial laws. Legal possession of a narcotic by a nurse is restricted to the following circumstances:

- When administering to a client according to a physician’s order
- When performing custodial care of narcotics as an agent of a health care facility
- When receiving a prescribed narcotic for medical treatment