CMA POLICY

Statement on Internet Prescribing
(Update 2004)

The act of prescribing medication is a medical act carried out in the context of a patient-physician relationship. As such, it is subject to the clinical standards of practice, as well as the ethical guidelines of the medical profession and applicable law. Physicians should be aware of and comply with the legal requirements in their province or territory.

If a physician wishes to sign a prescription for an individual who has not previously been his/her patient or a patient of his/her group practice or shared call group, basic principles of assessment and diagnosis must be applied. It is incumbent upon the physician to obtain an adequate history and perform an appropriate physical examination to reach a diagnosis which will ensure that the prescribed medications are appropriate. The physician should be expected to provide advice about any prescribed medication, and, where appropriate, would be expected to provide advice about appropriate monitoring requirements.

The physician is advised to fully document the encounter.

It is not acceptable for a physician to sign a prescription without properly assessing the patient, except as indicated above.