

# Speak easy



Sometimes a word can be a matter of life and death —

at least when it comes to prescribing pharmaceutical medication.

Incorrect drug pronunciation is a potentially life-threatening problem the

developers of Canadian Drug Speak hope to avoid with their recently launched program, an audio-visual training tool geared toward health care students and professionals.

"If something was transcribed incorrectly due to a verbal conversation then it could result in the wrong drug being dispensed, and of course, patient safety becomes an issue," says Crystal Lane, Acting Program Coordinator for Bow Valley College, and one of Canadian Drug

Speak's developers.

The tool was created by Bow Valley College as an educational resource for their pharmacy students. Lane says the initial goal was to help students learn brand and generic drug names, and the accurate way to pronounce them.

"You load the files from the CD-ROM onto your handheld MP3 player or iPod, and you can scroll through a playlist of different therapeutic classes," she explains. "So much like a language CD, it will say the

generic names, pause, and say the brand names that correspond with it. There's also a booklet so you can have the visual of the drug name while you're listening."

Canadian Drug Speak, which is the only one of its kind in the country, received such an enthusiastic response from pharmacy technicians at a

recent conference, it is now being marketed for professionals in all areas of health care, as well as a required resource in pharmacy technician programs nationwide.

"This is purely Canadian and geared towards a Canadian health care professional," adds Lane.

To learn more, visit [canadian.drugsspeak.com](http://canadian.drugsspeak.com).

## Legal re-course

Pending legislation in Alberta is set to regulate pharmacy technicians as a health profession in the province. The regulations, which are expected to be passed early in 2011 under the Health Professions Act, will require that all pharmacy technicians take a national certification ex-

am, and potentially return to school to bridge gaps in their education. A similar act has already been passed in Ontario, and the creators of Canadian Drug Speak hope the exam board will consider incorporating the learning tool. "Being faced with this national exam, lots of the technicians who are out there might need to brush up on their drug names," says Lane.

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