



PharmacareNEWS

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Public Funding for Prescription Renewal Services Available Effective March 19, 2020

To make it easier for Nova Scotians to renew prescriptions if required during the current COVID-19 outbreak, effective March 19, 2020, the Department of Health & Wellness will begin covering the professional service fee for pharmacists to prescribe prescription renewals for all eligible residents with a valid Nova Scotia health card.

This is earlier than the original launch date of April 1, 2020. The cost will be covered in accordance with the *Pharmacy Service Agreement*, which establishes fees of \$12 if three or fewer prescriptions are renewed during the service encounter, and \$20 if four or more prescriptions are renewed. Residents will continue to access their usual drug coverage or method of payment for any prescriptions they have filled.

As a temporary measure during the outbreak, and until June 1, 2020, there will be no claim limit (cap) on the number of prescription renewal services that can be billed for an eligible resident. Other than the cap being lifted, all other requirements as identified in the ***Nova Scotia Pharmacy Guide*** will apply for service claims.

Prescription renewals do **not** need to be completed in person.

In-Person Requirement Waived for Assessment and Prescribing

To support social distancing and residents in self isolation, the requirement for a patient to meet with a pharmacist for an in-person assessment for a funded clinical service is temporarily waived effective immediately and until June 1, 2020.

Pharmacists should refer to their Standards of Practice and use their professional discretion to determine if a service should be provided without an in-person assessment. All other requirements as identified in the ***Nova Scotia Pharmacy Guide*** will continue to apply for service claims.

Adjustments to Days Supply for Dispensing to Pharmacare Beneficiaries During COVID-19 Outbreak

As a temporary measure, based on recommendations from the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists, the Nova Scotia Pharmacare Programs will accept dispensing of smaller quantities than prescribed for all medications for a supply not lower than 30 days. Verbal order documentation requirements will not apply for prescriptions modified to the lower days supply in keeping with this recommendation during this time.

If there is a confirmed and severe specific drug shortage, exemptions may be granted for less than 30 days supply and exemptions to the 28-day supply list in the Nova Scotia Pharmacy Guide. Any such exemptions will be communicated to pharmacies.

Any changes to the above measures will be communicated to pharmacies through this bulletin.