



Protecting Newfoundlander's and Labradorian's Health Interests with 30-Day Medication Supply

News release

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The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board (NLPB), officially on March 19, 2020, provided guidance to pharmacists and the public that a 30-day supply of medication is recommended in order to protect the public's health interest as we proceed through the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a necessary, and temporary, proactive measure in place to prevent stockpile of medications and related medication shortages—a measure that is being implemented in provinces across Canada and is being monitored closely.

“Newfoundland and Labrador's health system is being tested during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that includes pharmacy services,” says NLPB Registrar Margot Priddle. “This virus has caused upheaval of a health care system that is already sensitive in nature. In order to ensure the people of the province have access to necessary pharmacy services and medications, we all have a role to play and we must work together to achieve a fair solution for everyone.”

A careful collaboration amongst the leaders in pharmacy in Newfoundland & Labrador is necessary right now—we need to work together on these issues as time is of the essence—to protect and ensure fair, quality and ethical practice during these trying times.

The 30-day supply is strictly a way for pharmacy professionals to help ensure patient safety so that the public continues to have access to the medications they need. If supply shortages were to happen, our health care system as a whole, both patients and healthcare professionals, will face greater issues than those we are experiencing currently.

The Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) has had an active voice for pharmacists throughout this pandemic. Pharmacists are currently experiencing increased service demands and decreased resources. This strain, combined with the risk of COVID-19 exposure that all front-line healthcare professionals face right now, is taking its toll on an essential piece of our health care system: pharmacy services.

“Pharmacies are seeing increased requests from patients seeking more months of their medication than they would normally get at one time,” says PANL President Janice Audeau. “We recognize that the 30-day supply limit may be a difficult adjustment. However, by appropriately managing inventory today, we are reducing the risk that patients will not be able to access their medication in the future.”

As with most public health services, there are costs incurred by pharmacies with every prescription dispensed—not just medication costs, but costs associated with processes in place to ensure the accuracy and safety of medications dispensed. Dispensing fees cover the costs of these critical professional services. During this challenging time, it is not reasonable or possible to demand that pharmacies absorb these costs.

“As our health care system works through this pandemic, it is important that we all exercise patience, understanding and most of all cooperation while these measures are in place as they are in place for the greater good,” says Margot

Priddle. “The 30-day supply recommendation is being monitored daily and will be revised once medication inventories show improvement.”

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About the Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board

The Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board continues to build on over 100 years of pharmacy practice regulation within Newfoundland & Labrador. Our actions are carefully made in accordance with our mandate to protect the public's health interest within the province.

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