



New Brunswick  
**Pharmacists' Association**  
**Association des Pharmaciens**  
du Nouveau-Brunswick

April 1, 2020

Dear fellow health care colleagues,

All healthcare professionals are doing their best to navigate this pandemic. It is a time like no other. We recognize we are all facing challenges and we are all in this together.

As directed by Public Health, healthcare professionals are limiting services to only those which are essential. As a result, downstream of those decisions, community pharmacists are dealing with an unprecedented volume of interactions with members of the public. The New Brunswick Pharmacists Association is concerned with the wellbeing of our pharmacy professionals and their support staff, and cognizant of the importance of ensuring community pharmacies remain able to provide service to their communities.

Several measures have been taken to mitigate risk of COVID-19 exposure to pharmacy professionals. The Association is requesting support from prescribers to further decrease risk.

1. To decrease face to face, and hand to hand contact
  - Please fax (preferred) or phone prescriptions into the pharmacy.
    - Take note that to maintain Canadians' access to controlled substances for medical treatments (e.g., treatment of substance use disorders and chronic pain), Health Canada has issued the following exemption:
      - permit prescribers to issue verbal orders (i.e., over the phone) to extend or refill a prescription for a "straight narcotic".
  - Direct patients to phone in their refills ahead and not bring in old prescription's vials. Most pharmacies are not collecting expired medications and sharps for now.
2. Increased volume of workload for pharmacists means a need for prioritization and triage as we care for clients. Wait times for non-emergent medications have increased to 24 – 48 hours in some cases. Please consider advising, when faxing or calling in prescriptions, when the patient will require the prescription to be filled.
3. Encourage your patients to avoid unnecessary visits to the pharmacy.
  - Advise patients you are faxing/phoning their prescription, and that they should go straight home if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or awaiting results of a test. Patients should plan to send someone else to the pharmacy to pick up prescriptions. Alternately, many pharmacies are promoting the use of drive thru pick up windows, offering curbside deliveries or arranging for delivery to the patient's door.

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[www.nbpharma.ca](http://www.nbpharma.ca)

4. Before directing patients, consider that the pharmacy may have suspended professional services which require pharmacy team members to be within 2 meters of patients, including physical assessments, blood pressure monitoring, point-of care testing, or administration of injections.

We thank you in advance for considering our requests. If you have any further suggestions as to how we can assist you during this challenging period, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Be safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet MacDonnell".

Janet MacDonnell

Interim Executive Director

cc. Christine Boudreau, President