



# Memo

To: Nurse Practitioners

From: The Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB)

Date: March 31, 2020

Re: Inappropriate Prescriptions for the Prevention and/or Treatment of COVID-19 Illness

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All Prescribers in New Brunswick have a central role to play in protecting the supply of medications at all times, and especially during a public health emergency.

There are concerns being expressed by the Department of Health that antibiotics, antimalarials, antiretrovirals, and bronchodilators are being inappropriately prescribed to prevent and/or treat possible COVID-19 illness in New Brunswick. Demand for medications such as lopinavir/ritonavir (Kaletra), hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin, salbutamol, and fluticasone has surged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are two important reasons for carefully managing the prescribing of medications to prevent and/or treat possible COVID-19 illness:

- The first is the lack of evidence to support their widespread use. As nurse practitioners, you have an obligation and duty to provide safe, competent, and ethical care through evidence-informed practice and to educate your patients that any treatment (including against COVID-19) needs to be evidence-informed and with consultation as required.
- The second reason is drug shortages. The current demand, if left unchecked, will create drug shortages and threaten the health of patients who are using these medications for approved indications. For example, hydroxychloroquine is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and lupus and is already experiencing shortages, and for some brands there is no supply.

Should you have questions about your practice requirements please see the links below or contact us.

- [Prescribing expectations of nurse practitioners in New Brunswick](#)
- [Standards for the Practice of Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioners](#)
- NANB [COVID-19 resource page](#)

During this time of unprecedented challenges, we wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of your responsibility to help protect the supply of these medications for patients for example those with HIV infection, rheumatic diseases and pulmonary disorders.



The Department of Health is actively monitoring the prescribing and dispensing of these medications and will notify the Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) of potential instances of inappropriate prescribing.

The NANB recognizes the great efforts that you are making during these unprecedented and challenging times. Please continue to watch for communications from the NANB and Public Health on COVID-19 as we navigate this evolving situation.