

Professional Notice

To: Pharmacy Practitioners
From: Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
Date: March 28, 2020
Re: COVID-19 Pharmacy Practice Provisions and Guidance

In continuing to address issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSCP has established the following pharmacy practice provisions and guidance.

First Aid/CPR Certification Expiration

A First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certificate expiring in 2020 will be considered as meeting the First Aid/CPR requirements for a Drug Administration Permit until December 31, 2020.

Note: Your First Aid provider may have timeline requirements for recertification.

Extended Deadline for Private Consultation Rooms

The effective date for pharmacies to be compliant with the [*Private Consultation Rooms Policy*](#) has been extended to December 31, 2020.

Amendments to the MAiD Standards and the Return of Medication Policy

In response to current shortages of medications for medical assistance in dying (MAiD), the [*Standards of Practice: Medical Assistance in Dying*](#) and the [*Return of Medication Policy*](#) have been amended to allow pharmacies to accept for return a previously dispensed injectable medication for the purposes of MAiD if they are satisfied that:

- the medication has not left the possession of the physician or nurse practitioner (or their authorized designate);
- each dose is full and has not been used; and
- the medication has been stored in accordance with required storage conditions.

These amendments are permanent and will be in effect after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coordinated Plan for Temporary Pharmacy Closures

Pharmacies will need to consider the patients who rely on them for essential regular or scheduled services (e.g., daily witnesses of opioid agonist maintenance treatment) and have a plan for alternate arrangements to ensure continued patient care. [It is important that pharmacies work together now to establish an emergency plan coordinated with other local pharmacies.](#)

- Pharmacies who are experiencing temporary staff reductions due to COVID-19 illness or self-isolation are encouraged to join the [NS Rx Connect Facebook Group](#), a resource that has been created to connect pharmacies experiencing emergency staffing shortages with pharmacists and registered pharmacy technicians who may be able to help.

- Pharmacies who are facing closure due to COVID-19 illness or self-isolation can contact PANS for assistance in avoiding and managing closures.
- In the event of a temporary pharmacy closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, pharmacies must follow the steps outlined in the [Temporary Pharmacy Closures](#) policy, including notifying the NSCP of the closure at the earliest opportunity. Pharmacies do not need to notify the NSCP of temporary business hours changes.

Health Canada Changes to Loss/Theft Reporting

Health Canada staff have been working remotely which has affected the ability to monitor fax machines on a routine basis. At this time, please submit your Loss or Theft reports through email instead of fax. This is especially important if a pharmacy receives a non-deliverable message from their submitted fax. These can continue to be faxed to the NSCP.

- Loss or Theft reporting information can easily be accessed at: [Loss or Theft](#)
- The online form can be submitted directly by filling out: [Loss or Theft Report Form](#)
- If the Health Canada website is inaccessible, a copy of the form can be obtained and sent directly to: hc.ocs.reporting-rapporteur.bsc.sc@canada.ca

Check for e-Prescribing in the DIS

Please remember to check the DIS for patient prescriptions. DIS is working with Doctors Nova Scotia and individual physicians to rapidly enroll them for e-prescribing, and it is anticipated that a greater volume of prescriptions will be e-prescribed in the coming weeks. Patients are being advised by prescribers to call the pharmacy ahead of time.

Please continue to watch for ongoing communications from the NSCP as we work closely with Public Health, PANS and other healthcare stakeholders during this time. A [COVID-19 landing page](#) has been created on the NSCP website where you can access this and other important and helpful information.