

Professional Notice

To: Pharmacy Practitioners
From: Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
Date: March 24, 2020; clarified October 1, 2020
Re: Emergency Protocol for Prescribing CDSA Drugs; Changes to NSPMP and DIS; Fax Transmission Policy

Emergency Protocol for Prescribing CDSA Drugs

In conjunction with the *Prescribing in a Public Health Emergency/Crisis* (Appendix H) provisions in the *Standards of Practice: Prescribing Drugs* and the *Health Canada subsection 56(l) class exemption*, the NSCP has developed an *Emergency Protocol: Prescribing Narcotics, Controlled and Targeted Drugs* (effective March 19, 2020).

The protocol outlines provisions and limitations for pharmacists when prescribing monitored drugs for acute pain, opioid use disorder and other indications, including when a patient's regular pharmacy is closed and/or their regular prescriber is not available.

Changes to the Nova Scotia Prescription Monitoring Program (NSPMP) and Drug Information System (DIS) to enable pharmacist prescribing of CDSA drugs

The NSPMP Board has approved the following:

- Recognize pharmacists as registered prescribers under the NSPMP Program
- Allow faxed prescriptions and verbal orders for monitored drugs
- Prescriptions are not required to be on a duplicate prescription form^{**†}

[†]**October 1, 2020: NSPMP clarified in their October Bulletin that although CDSA exemptions apply at this time, duplicate prescription forms are required for all written monitored drug prescriptions (excluding benzodiazepines) dispensed at Nova Scotia pharmacies.**

- Where a signature or electronic equivalent is not feasible/reasonable due to COVID-19 measures, document the name of the individual who picked up the prescription or accepted its delivery

In alignment with the Health Canada subsection 56(l) class exemption, these changes are in effect until September 30, 2020 unless extended or revoked by the NSPMP.

^{**}For clarity, out of province prescribers will still need to be registered with NSPMP and obtain a registration number prior to prescribing narcotics and control products. Pharmacists will need to obtain the NSPMP identification number from the prescriber in order to dispense the prescription. There continues to be a "dummy code" within DIS for out of province prescribers who prescribe a benzodiazepine. Out of province prescribers can register on the NSPMP website.

Verifying Authenticity

Again, during this time of disruption, pharmacy practitioners need to be extra vigilant in determining the legitimacy of the prescriber and the prescription, particularly for prescriptions that have not been e-prescribed in the DIS or written on a NSPMP form.

Prescription Transfers for CDSA Drugs

Currently, the DIS cannot accommodate prescription transfers for CDSA drugs. Therefore, communication between pharmacies must take place either via telephone or fax to complete the transfer. Transferring pharmacies must discontinue (abort) the transferred prescription in their local system to ensure that only one active prescription record remains in the patient's DIS profile.

Fax Transmission Policy

The *Fax Transmission of Prescriptions* policy has been updated, including:

- The restriction against faxing prescriptions for medications monitored by the NSPMP has been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in effect until September 30, 2020 unless revoked or renewed.
- The requirement for physician "certifications statements" has been removed.