

Important *Update*

Medication access during COVID-19 pandemic

March 30, 2020

We are closely monitoring the effects of COVID-19 on the demand for prescription drugs. We are working closely with pharmacy partners to ensure our members have access to the medications they need, when they need them.

Following official direction

The provincial pharmacy regulators in several provinces, in consultation with government, have issued temporary drug dispensing directives to pharmacists to ensure a stable supply of drugs for all patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. In these provinces, prescription drugs will only be dispensed for one month's supply at a time except under exceptional circumstances. This could result in additional pharmacy dispensing fees.

This mandatory measure was not initiated by Medavie Blue Cross, but we understand that efforts are needed to ensure all Canadians can continue to have access to the drugs they need during this uncertain time.

As always, we look to pharmacists' clinical and professional judgement to ensure the varying medication needs of our members are met.

We will continue to assess if other adjustments are required to our drug claims processing practices to ensure appropriate supply of medication to our members.

Protecting everyone's health

In order to help keep pharmacists and their staff healthy, you are asked not to go to any pharmacy if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, new onset of cough or difficulty breathing), in the 14 days after the onset of symptoms or if you think you have been exposed to the virus.

As always, members should ensure their refills are up to date, not waiting to the last minute or until their prescription runs out before reordering.

To help minimize your social interactions, you can also consider receiving your prescriptions through home delivery service. Talk to your pharmacist about your options.

Important *Update*

Renewal of Prior Authorization drugs

Some medications – usually high cost specialty drugs – require prior authorization approval to ensure reimbursement.

We understand that for members currently on a drug requiring prior authorization, it may be difficult right now to obtain the required renewal information, such as updated tests or exams.

If you have a prior authorization set to renew between **March 1, 2020 to May 31, 2020**, we have extended your renewal period by **90 days from your current renewal date or until July 31, 2020, whichever comes first.**

Certain drugs, such as for Hepatitis C, are excluded from this extension.

This extension applies to prior authorization **renewals only**. All new prior authorization requests will continue to follow existing practices.