



Promoting the appropriate use,
and reducing the abuse and misuse of monitored drugs in Nova Scotia.

Important Information for Prescribers and Pharmacists

Health Canada's CDSA Exemptions

Health Canada has extended the exemptions to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) and its Regulations effective October 1, 2020.

NSPMP changes remain in place to recognize pharmacists as temporary registered prescribers under the NSPMP to enable activities as defined under this exemption. As such, pharmacists are now enabled to extend prescriptions, transfer prescriptions to other pharmacies within the same province or territory, and practitioners can issue verbal prescriptions for controlled substances.

The NSPMP continues to support the faxing of prescriptions for controlled/monitored drugs to pharmacies.

All NSPMP changes in relation to this Health Canada exemption are effective October 01, 2020 until the earliest of September 30, 2021, or the date this exemption is replaced by another exemption, or the date it is revoked, or the date the NSPMP Board of Directors revokes.

Faxing Monitored Drug Prescriptions

To ensure safe faxing of prescriptions for monitored drugs, fax to one pharmacy only and ensure the patient does not have a copy of the faxed prescription in hand. This will prevent duplicate prescription fills at the same pharmacy or another pharmacy.

In the event the patient decides to receive their prescription at a different pharmacy, communication must take place to ensure the prescription is cancelled at the original pharmacy.

The NSPMP eAccess and DIS systems are available to review the full patient monitored drug profile prior to prescribing or dispensing monitored drugs.



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Duplicate Prescriptions

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.

Days' Supply

Days' supply data is an important part of the NSPMP Drug Utilization Review and monitoring activities. It is used to assist the Program to calculate the monitored drug dosages prescribed.

As an example, an entry of 300 tablets for two days' supply may result in a call from the Program to confirm the entry for days' supply.

The program appreciates your continued attention in completion of this field.

Out of Province Prescriptions for Monitored Drugs

The NSPMP requires all out of province prescribers register with the Program when they are providing monitored drugs prescriptions that may be filled at Nova Scotia pharmacies.

However, registration is voluntary for out of province prescribers.

Registration is simple and timely. Please contact the Program for assistance or visit our website.

For support with prescription processing issues, please follow regular support processes with your software vendor.



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Expanding Monitoring Activities

Drug Utilization Reviews (DURs)

The NSPMP's DUR process is expanding further to monitor first prescriptions, opioids, benzodiazepines, stimulants and other monitored drugs, either alone, or in combination.

We recognize that prescribing varies with each clinical scenario. We may request further information from you regarding the medical context for the prescribing of monitored drugs for your patient(s), as the Program has access to monitored drug prescription dispense data only. The information provides us with a better understanding of the context of your prescribing to complete the review and ascertain if there are any services or recommendations that we may offer.

Prescriber Practice Reviews

Prescriber Practice Reviews have been updated to reflect incorporation of benzodiazepine monitoring.

Pharmacists are reminded they may receive an inquiry letter as they are currently recognized as temporary registered prescribers of monitored drugs.

Safe Prescribing Tips

When issuing a verbal order/fax for a monitored drug, it is helpful to provide:

- Provincial licence number
 - Helps confirm prescriber identity
- Start and stop dates
 - Helps determine when dose changes or tapers come into effect (i.e. OAMT, palliative care)
 - Helps identify prescriptions intended for a short duration/specific indication (i.e. post-surgery pain management)
 - Helps identify potential early refill requests



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Fax prompts to fill monitored drug prescriptions:

- Occasionally you or your office may receive fax prompts to refill monitored drug prescriptions. Some considerations:
 - Only the prescriber responsible for the patient's care should provide refill prescriptions
 - Reassess the patient's condition and the requirement for the ongoing monitored drug medication
 - Write a new prescription for the patient rather than simply filling the fax request form

First Prescriptions of a monitored drug or new molecule consider:

- Strength of tablet and tablet quantity for patient safety
- Shorter dispensing intervals i.e. 1 - 3 days for acute pain management or 1 - 2 weeks for chronic pain.
 - If the medication is not needed, then it remains safely in the pharmacy rather than in the patient's home

Other

The NSPMP eAccess application allows prescribers and pharmacists 24/7 access to quickly view the most recent 18 months of monitored drug prescription history for patients, prior to prescribing and dispensing monitored drugs. To register, please contact the NSPMP for assistance. For eAccess login go to <https://eaccess.nspmp.ca/>

Please follow regular processes with your software vendor for support with prescription processing issues.

Our consultants are available as a resource to you.
Medical Consultant, Dr. Peter MacDougall, 902-478-0546
Pharmacist Consultant, Lillian Berry, 902-496-3636.

Please contact the NSPMP at 902-496-7123 or 1-877-476-7767 if you require further clarification.