

MEMO

Date: May 18, 2022

To: CEOs & Leadership Teams, Manitoba Health Service Delivery Organizations
Community Pharmacists
Primary Care Providers & Clinics

From: Dr. Perry Gray, Chief Medical Officer, Shared Health
Brendon Mitchell, Regional Pharmacy Director, WRHA Pharmacy Program

Re: **COVID-19 Treatment Update – Community Pharmacy Dispensation of Paxlovid**

COVID-19 treatments remain an effective early measure to help prevent severe illness, particularly among those people at higher risk. To ensure both ease and equity of access to treatment, please note the following updates.

- A. **Effective May 20, 2022**, participating community pharmacies will begin dispensing Paxlovid® (nirmatrelvir & ritonavir). Centralized referral for access to Paxlovid® will be discontinued. A list of participating pharmacies in communities across Manitoba will be available here: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/treatment/>.
- B. To ensure equitable access to treatment, a valid Manitoba Health card/coverage will not be required by clients accessing publicly-funded Paxlovid®.
- C. Centralized referral for Remdesivir remains in place. An updated referral form is available here: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-treatment-referral-form.pdf>.

Comprehensive information regarding COVID-19 Treatment Options is available here: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/treatment/>. Updated guidance for providers has been developed and is now available here: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-paxlovid-provider-guidance.pdf>.

Background Information - PAXLOVID

Indicated for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 infection, Paxlovid® is an oral antiviral therapy intended for patients at high risk of progression to severe illness, including hospitalization or death.

Comprehensive information regarding Paxlovid® is available to prescribers and pharmacists.

- **Clinical guidelines** to support clinicians in determining appropriateness of Paxlovid® therapy for their patients: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-paxlovid-provider-guidance.pdf>
- **Medication interaction resources** – <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-paxlovid-drug-interactions.pdf>
- **COVID therapy decision support** – <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-treatment-quick-notes.pdf>
- **Education session** – overview of Paxlovid therapy is coming soon. A link will be added to the COVID-19 Treatment Page once available
<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/treatment/>
- **Patient Information** - <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-paxlovid-patient-info.pdf>

Prescribers and pharmacists are pivotal in assessing the appropriateness of this therapy. Dialogue between prescribers and dispensing pharmacists is likely required in many situations given the complexity of medication interactions and time sensitivity of initiating treatment within five (5) days of symptom onset.

Attention Pharmacists:

As health providers with extensive knowledge regarding medications and in particular medication interactions, pharmacists reviewing prescriptions for Paxlovid® are strongly encouraged to not only flag medication interactions, but also to make treatment recommendations to support prescribers where a drug interaction with Paxlovid® is identified, including recommendations to hold or modify the dose of other medications, OR in the case of significant interaction, a recommendation not to proceed with Paxlovid® therapy.

Attention Prescribers:

Prescribers are encouraged to confirm whether electronic medical record (EMR) applications support medication interaction flags for Paxlovid® (common systems such as Accuro® have recently added Paxlovid® to their database).

There are several additional resources to support pharmacists and prescribers in determining the significance of potential medication interactions, including:

- Liverpool Covid-19 interaction tracker: <https://www.covid19-druginteractions.org/checker>
- Ontario Science Table Paxlovid ‘need to know’: <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/nirmatrelvir-ritonavir-paxlovid-what-prescribers-and-pharmacists-need-to-know-2-0/>
- BC-CDC Drug Interaction Practice Tool: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-treatment/PracticeTool3_DrugInteractionsContraindications.pdf

Referral Pathways for Infusion Therapy are Unchanged:

Where there is a decision not to proceed with Paxlovid® therapy, prescribers are reminded to refer to information regarding referral pathways which remain in place for infusion therapy.

- Remdesivir Referral Form: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-treatment-referral-form.pdf>