



For British Columbia's PharmaNet Users

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**PHARMANET SERVICE LIMITATIONS JANUARY 7 – 9, 2011**

**Overview**

The BC Government is implementing changes to their computer systems’ data centre from **Friday January 7th, 2011 at 11:00 pm until Sunday January 9th, 2011 at 5:00 pm.**

Certain parts of the PharmaNet system will not be available during this changeover period. As a direct result, you will have to take special action when a patient cannot provide you with their Personal Health Number (PHN).

**Which patients will be affected**

Patients who registered for Fair PharmaCare coverage **before January 7, 2011** and who can provide you their PHN will not be affected; patient records will be available and their dispensing will adjudicate as usual.

Patients who registered for PharmaCare **on Friday, January 7** will need to have their registration verified by Health Insurance BC (HIBC) before their prescription claims can be adjudicated. To have a prescription covered, they will need to contact HIBC before the prescription is filled.

Patients who do not have a PHN will need to be registered before their prescription claims can be adjudicated.

**Searching for a patient’s PHN during the changeover**

Normally, when patients cannot provide a PHN, you carry out a Name Search (TPN transaction) to find out if their PHN has been assigned.

During the changeover period, the PharmaNet name search capabilities will be reduced, so it may be harder to determine whether a patient who cannot present their Care Card has a Personal Health Number (PHN).

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The use of PharmaNet is not intended as a substitute for professional judgment. Information on PharmaNet is not exhaustive and cannot be relied upon as complete. The absence of a warning about a drug or drug combination is not an indication that the drug or drug combination is safe, appropriate or effective in any given patient. Health care professionals should confirm information obtained from PharmaNet, and ensure no additional relevant information exists, before making patient care decisions.

When a patient cannot provide a PHN, please follow the procedure below **before** assigning them a new PHN.

### ***Step 1 – Search your local system records***

- If you find their PHN and confirm their identity, you can proceed with dispensing in the usual fashion.
- If you have no record of their PHN, go to Step 2.

### ***Step 2 – Search the PharmaNet system***

Conduct a name search on PharmaNet using the search guidelines specified in [Name Search Strategies](#) below.

- If you find a matching record, dispense the prescription in the usual fashion.
- If no match is found, repeat the search two more times, using the [advanced search tips](#) on page 3.
- If further searches yield no match, go to Step 3.

### ***Step 3 – Assign patient a PHN***

If you cannot contact the physician, assign the patient a new PHN using your software's Request New PHN (TPH transaction).

When assigning the PHN be sure to:

- Enter the patient's full legal name as it appears on their SIN card, driver's licence or other official document.
- Enter the patient's full first name (NOT an initial or nickname).

For further details on assigning a new PHN, refer to Section 2.4.3 – Assigning a PHN in Chapter 2 of the PharmaCare/PharmaNet Policy and Procedures Manual at [www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/generalinfo/policy/pharmacypractices.pdf](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/generalinfo/policy/pharmacypractices.pdf)

Once you have assigned the PHN, inform the patient of their coverage options (see [Assisting patients to register for coverage](#) on page 3).

## **Name Search Strategies**

Normally, PharmaNet allows for wide searches in which you can use partial names to call up a list of possible matches. During the outage period, you must use a more stringent search.

**IMPORTANT!** To find a patient's record, you will need to enter **ALL** the following patient information:

- full last name, AND;
- full or partial given name, AND;
- gender, AND;
- year of birth (see Tip 1 below).

Matching records will be returned. If no match is found OR if more than 25 matches are found, the system will display error message "108 No matches found for selection criteria chosen."

### ***Basic Name Search Tips***

**Tip 1:** In the initial search, do NOT enter date or month of birth if uncertain; if they are incorrect, a "No match found" message is returned. Use the full DOB only when narrowing a search that has returned multiple results.

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**Tip 2:** If the given name could have been entered in a number of ways, enter a partial given name with 1 to 14 characters to cast a wider search. Then use the full name to narrow the results (e.g. AI will return Alan, Allan, Allen and Alyn).

**Tip 3:** Use patient address information only to narrow a search that has returned multiple results, but do not do so unless you're sure it's an exact match to the information in PharmaNet.

### ***Advanced Name Search Tips***

- Ask the patient for their full legal name(s) as they appear on their SIN card, driver's licence or other official document.
- Ask if the patient has changed their last name (e.g., married or divorced).
- Ask if the patient has a hyphenated name (e.g., with spouse's name).
- Check for embedded spaces in the last name (e.g., van der Ham vs. Vanderham).
- Search under the patient's first or second initial and surname.

**Note:** Many patients appear under their initials only.

- Search under the patient's full middle name.

**Note:** Some patients use their middle name as their common name.

- Check whether the patient uses a nickname, which might begin with a different letter, and try variant spellings on the given name.

**Note:** For example, Robert may be entered as Bob, Robbie, Bobby etc.; Chris may be Christopher, Christophe or even Krystof.

- Try closely related names (e.g., Mac vs. Mc or St vs. Ste or Saint).
- Switch the patient's first or second name with their surname.

**Note:** Changing the order of names is a common data-entry error, especially for patients from cultural backgrounds in which the family name traditionally comes first.

- For people with only one legal name, search with that name in both the Last Name and Given Name fields or, if that does not work, with the one name in the Last Name field and a title (e.g., Mr) in the Given Name field.
- For newborns, put in the first name of the newborn as "Baby Girl" or "Baby Girl A" or "Baby Boy" or "Baby Boy A."
- If possible, contact the prescriber and ask them for the patient's PHN.

### **Assisting patients to register for coverage during the changeover**

Normally, if you cannot find the patient's PHN, you assign them a new PHN so you can dispense the prescription. Because the new PHN provides no record of the patient having PharmaCare coverage, dispensing would adjudicate to zero and the patient would pay the full cost of the prescription.

Once a new PHN has been assigned, the patient has the option of registering for Fair PharmaCare by phone before filling the prescription to receive immediate coverage. Once registered, PharmaNet will adjudicate the dispensing based on the patient's assigned level of coverage.

During the changeover period, patients cannot register by phone **until you have assigned them a PHN.**

The help desk will have appropriate staffing levels during the change-over to assist patients. The help desk will use guidelines to fill patient requests to ensure that consistent service is provided.

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To ensure that patients get the coverage they would normally be entitled to, you will have to provide them with a few simple instructions and contact information so they can register (see [Recommended Procedure](#) below for details).

Some patients to whom you assign a new PHN may be eligible for immediate coverage of their prescription costs because:

- they are already registered for Fair PharmaCare and/or another plan (such as Plan C or Plan G) but you have been unable to find their record, OR
- they would be immediately eligible to have all or part of the prescription costs covered as soon as they registered for PharmaCare (e.g., qualified for no-deductible Fair PharmaCare coverage, Plan C or Plan G coverage).

The Ministry is committed to ensuring that patients who are in financial need do not forego their prescriptions during the outage period. If a patient indicates that paying for their prescription will be difficult or impossible, please ask the patient to contact the Health Insurance BC (HIBC) Help Desk at 1-800-663-7100 outside the Lower Mainland or 604-683-7151 for the Vancouver area to register for Fair PharmaCare.

### Recommended Procedure (January 8 and 9, 2011)

After you have assigned a PHN to the patient but before you dispense the prescription, use your local system to determine the cost of the medication. Inform the patient of the cost and ask them if they would prefer to pay the full amount and submit a claim for reimbursement of the PharmaCare portion or to apply for emergency temporary coverage by phone.

- If the patient indicates that they prefer to pay for the prescription, process the prescription claim in the usual fashion. Inform them that they can submit a claim for their portion of the cost to PharmaCare and, depending on their level of coverage they may receive reimbursement at a later date.
  - If the patient indicates they wish to apply for emergency temporary coverage:
    - Inform them that they may be eligible for **emergency temporary coverage** if they register with PharmaCare by telephone. Explain that the registration process will only take a few minutes and is effective immediately.
    - Provide them with their newly-assigned PHN and the HIBC Help Desk contact information (phone numbers 1-800-663-7100 outside the Lower Mainland or 604-683-7151 for the Vancouver area).
    - Let the patient know that once they have registered, they should return to your pharmacy to have the prescription filled. Doing this helps to ensure that the transaction will adjudicate correctly.
    - Inform the patient that the dispense will allow a three-day supply of medication and submit the transaction. Patients must then register for Fair PharmaCare before any further prescriptions can be covered. HIBC will know that the patient has temporary coverage that includes only three days' worth of drugs. Regular online and telephone registration services will resume on Monday, January 10, 2011.
- \* **Note:** Some prescriptions, such as creams cannot be provided in three-day amounts; in such cases, provide the smallest amount that is possible.