PharmaNet Bulletin

For British Columbia's PharmaNet Users

PharmaNet Service Interruption—July 6, 10:00 pm through July 7, 6:00 pm

The Ministry of Health is enhancing PharmaNet in preparation for the increased volume of transactions and new services such as electronic medical records (EMRs) and electronic prescribing (ePrescribing). These changes to PharmaNet infrastructure further improve patient safety and reduce administrative time for pharmacists and physicians.

> **To make these changes, PharmaNet will be unavailable to all users from Saturday, July 6 at 10:00 pm until Sunday, July 7 at 6:00 pm.**
>
> **During this time, no functions that require PharmaNet data or connection will be available.**

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Health

PharmaNet

The changes will:

- upgrade the PharmaNet infrastructure (servers, operating system, and databases)
- integrate PharmaNet with other Provincial Electronic Health Record components
- make it possible for community-based medical practices to connect to PharmaNet
- move PharmaNet to new servers that can handle the anticipated increases in network traffic and meet the province's emergency management business continuity plan. The new servers are part of a broader government-wide initiative and PharmaNet is one of the applications that is being transitioned to a new, more secure, and modern infrastructure.

Which services will be affected?

During the service interruption (July 6, 10:00 p.m. until July 7, 6:00 p.m.), you will not be able to use PharmaNet to:

- access or update patient medication histories
- submit claims for real-time adjudication
- check to see if a patient has a Personal Health Number (PHN)
- assign new PHNs
- provide Medication Review services (as the patient's PharmaNet profile will not be available at the time of service)

Also, the automated **PharmaCare Information Line**, which provides Special Authority and Blood Glucose Test Strip coverage information, relies on PharmaNet and will not be available. This information will be available only through the HelpDesk.

Which services will not be affected?

Fair PharmaCare registration

Patients will be able to register for Fair PharmaCare by phone or online. Their coverage information (including applicable deductibles and family maximums), however, cannot be entered into PharmaNet until service is restored. Eligibility will be backdated to the date the patient registered.

PharmaNet HelpDesk

Although the PharmaNet HelpDesk will not have access to PharmaNet during the service interruption, they will be able to assist you in:

- verifying a patient's PHN
- assigning a PHN to a new patient
- determining whether a patient has been granted Special Authority for a prescription
- determining whether a patient is eligible for coverage of blood glucose test strips

Note: The PharmaNet HelpDesk will **not** be able to tell you if a patient is covered by any of the PharmaCare plans.

Preparing for the service interruption

PharmaNet users who need to confirm or update medication histories

Authorized personnel in community pharmacies, hospitals, emergency departments, medical offices, and other locations will not be able to use PharmaNet to assist in confirming a patient's medication history. Users who can normally update patient information will not be able to do so.

Confirming medication histories: Please advise your staff of the upcoming service interruption and, wherever possible, confirm a patient's medication history before the service interruption. To confirm a medication history during the outage, use local records or ask the patient to bring their current medication containers with them.

Updating patient medication histories: Please advise your staff to enter this information after PharmaNet service resumes.

Pharmacies

We recommend that you advise patients to fill prescriptions before or after the service interruption if at all possible. To assist you, we have prepared two **patient posters** (one suitable for posting within your pharmacy, one suitable for onscreen display) and **printable prescription package notices** (small and large).

*Visit www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/bulletin/index.html to download these documents. **Five copies** of the first poster have also been mailed to all community pharmacies.*

During the service interruption

Updates during the outage

During the outage, a link to this bulletin, answers to questions from users, and any updates on PharmaNet status will be available online at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/outage.html.

Determining a patient's medication history

While PharmaNet is unavailable, use professional judgment. Check other patient records. Ask the patient or the patient's caregivers. If the patient attends one pharmacy regularly, call the patient's pharmacy and ask them to consult their local system records.

Processing prescriptions for patients covered by insurers other than PharmaCare

All prescriptions must be entered into PharmaNet to update the patient's medication history. During the service interruption, claims cannot be moved on to other insurers.

Patients covered by a third-party insurer

Some third-party insurers remit payment directly to the dispensing pharmacy. In such cases, even if you were to select the "pay cardholder" option, the other insurer will reimburse the pharmacy rather than the patient.

Therefore, to ensure your patient is properly reimbursed, either provide a small no-charge supply **or** submit the claim after PharmaNet service resumes.

Dispensing prescriptions and submitting claims

If you do not wish to advance a temporary supply to the patient and the patient needs the medication immediately, please follow the guidelines below.

Enter all prescription claims into your local software. They will be held until PharmaNet service resumes.

Some local software will send the batched claims automatically when service resumes; other software may require you to initiate submission of the claims. Please check with your software vendor for details, if necessary.

> **Please note:** During the service interruption, PharmaCare requests that pharmacies comply with PharmaCare policies (e.g., Full Payment Policy) to the extent that local records and system access permit.

For general information on dispensing prescriptions and submitting claims when PharmaNet is offline, see Section 2.6—Dealing with PharmaNet Network Outages— in the PharmaCare Policy Manual. Consult the table below for specific procedures.

Dispensing/Claims Procedures

Action	Details
1. Determine payment option	• Flag the claim as "pay provider." Once PharmaNet is back in service, the claim will adjudicate and you will be reimbursed, **OR** • Advise the patient that they will have to pay for their prescription. Flag the claim as "pay cardholder." Depending on their level of coverage, they may qualify for reimbursement of all or some of the prescription cost. If they qualify for PharmaCare coverage, PharmaCare will automatically issue a payment to the patient by cheque within 30 days. Ensure that the patient's address is up to date on the local pharmacy system, **OR** • If the patient has third-party insurance, either provide a small no-charge supply **or** submit the claim after PharmaNet service resumes.
If the patient decides to fill the prescription now	
2. Obtain patient PHN	• **If patient has a PHN** but is not in your local system, verify their identity in the usual manner. • **If patient has a PHN but does not know what it is**, verify the patient's identity, then call the PharmaNet HelpDesk to get the patient's PHN. • **If patient does not have a PHN**, verify the patient's identity as usual, then call the PharmaNet HelpDesk to have a PHN assigned. o If the patient is a B.C. resident, suggest they register for Fair PharmaCare before filling their prescription. Registration takes only a short time and is effective immediately. Depending on their level of coverage, they may qualify for reimbursement of all or some of the prescription cost. Patients can register by phone (1-800-663-7100 outside the Lower Mainland or 604-683-7151 for the Vancouver area) or online at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/fpcreg.html.

3. Check the product's PharmaCare benefit status	• **If you are not sure of a drug's PharmaCare benefit status**, use the online Formulary Search to determine PharmaCare coverage, maximum price and any requirement for prior Special Authority approval (see PharmaCare Formulary Search Results fields for details.)
	
	• **If the drug is a benefit and does not require Special Authority approval,** enter the claim as usual, flagging it as "pay provider" or "pay cardholder" as appropriate.
	
	• **If the drug is a partial benefit**, enter the claim as usual, flag it as "pay cardholder" and collect payment from patient. The patient will need to submit their receipt to their private insurer, if applicable.
	
	• **If the drug requires prior Special Authority (SA) approval,** contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk. They will check PharmaCare files to see if the patient has a valid Special Authority.
	
	   o If an SA is in place, enter the prescription as usual, flagging the claim "pay provider" or "pay cardholder" as appropriate.
	
	   o If an SA is not in place, enter the prescription as "pay cardholder."

If the product is Blood Glucose Test Strips (BGTS)	

4. Check patient's eligibility for BGTS	• If the patient does not have a card or letter of authorization, contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk. They will be able to confirm whether the patient has BGTS coverage.
	
	   o If BGTS coverage is in place, enter the claim as usual, flagging the claim as "pay provider" or "pay cardholder" as appropriate.
	
	   o If BGTS coverage is not in place, enter the claim as "pay cardholder."

If a patient is unable to pay for their prescription

If a patient is unable to pay for their prescription:

- **advance the patient a small supply to tide them over until PharmaNet service resumes**

  OR

- **(New temporary policy) dispense an emergency 3-day no-charge supply to the patient if:**

  1. the patient is eligible (as detailed in the table below), and
  2. the drug is covered by PharmaCare (as detailed in the table below), and
  3. in your professional judgment, dispensing the medication immediately is absolutely necessary for patient health.

If all three criteria are met, PharmaCare will ensure that, for the emergency 3-day supply, your pharmacy is paid for the PharmaCare maximum cost of the drug and your usual pharmacy dispensing fee—up to the PharmaCare maximum dispensing fee of $10.00. For the subsequent claim for the balance of the prescription, PharmaCare will cover the maximum dispensing fee and applicable drug costs.

When PharmaCare coverage will be 100% for the emergency supply drug cost, the PharmaCare Full Payment policy applies.

Processing requests for a 3-day emergency supply during the outage

> **The emergency 3-day supply is available only during the service interruption.**
> **Once service resumes, this coverage will cease.**
> Using the special intervention codes below, PharmaCare will re-adjudicate these claims after the service resumes.

Claims procedure for 3-day emergency supplies

Action	Details

1. Verify patient eligibility	• Confirm that the patient
	     ○ cannot pay for a PharmaCare-covered medication, **and**
	     ○ is a B.C. resident
	• If the patient has moved to B.C. but does not meet MSP residency requirements and you cannot advance a small no-charge supply, please contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk and explain the situation. They will be able to advise you.

2. Check the product's PharmaCare benefit status	• **If you are not sure of a drug's PharmaCare benefit status**, use the online [Formulary Search](#) to determine PharmaCare coverage, maximum price and any requirement for prior Special Authority approval (see [Using the PharmaCare Formulary Search](#) for details.) • **If the drug is not covered,** explain to the patient that the drug is not eligible for the emergency no-charge coverage. • **If the drug is a benefit and does not require Special Authority approval,** enter the claim with the PharmaCare maximum drug price and maximum dispensing fee, flagging the claim as "pay provider." Do not enter any amounts above the PharmaCare allowable maximums. • **If the drug is a partial benefit (e.g., RDP or LCA)**, PharmaCare can pay only the PharmaCare maximum price. Therefore, you may prefer to advance the patient a small no-charge supply if the medication is needed urgently. *continued...*

Action	Details

Check the product's status, continued…	• **If the drug requires prior Special Authority (SA) approval**, contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk. They will check PharmaCare files to see if the patient has a valid Special Authority.
	   ○ If an SA is in place, enter the prescription with the PharmaCare maximum drug price and maximum dispensing fee, flagging the claim "pay provider."
	   ○ If an SA is not in place, the drug is not eligible for coverage, and therefore, the patient does not qualify for an emergency 3-day supply.

3. Evaluate urgent need for the medication	• Use your professional judgment to determine whether dispensing the medication at this point is absolutely necessary for patient health.
	   ○ If an immediate dispense is required, provide the patient with a 3-day emergency supply and submit the claim.
	Note: For items such as creams, which cannot be provided in three-day amounts, please dispense the smallest amount possible.
	   ~ PharmaCare will audit the days' supply dispensed under emergency coverage.~

4. Submit claim	• Enter the claim in your local system with one of the following intervention code combinations (Note that PharmaNet can accept only two intervention codes per claim.):
	   ○ For un-adapted prescriptions: Enter the *new intervention code* **EA–Pharmacist authorized off-hours claim** + **PT–Emergency supply while PharmaNet unavailable**. The EA code enables correct adjudication of the supply. PT ensures the claim cannot be counted as an active dispense for Frequent Dispensing Policy purposes.
	   OR
	   ○ For adapted prescriptions: Enter the *new intervention code* **EA–Pharmacist authorized off-hours claim** + the appropriate intervention code for the adaptation (NI–dosage change/NJ–formulation change/NK–directions for use modified/NL–renewal of prescription/NM–therapeutic substitution) as required by the College of Pharmacists of BC.
	   AND
	   ○ Select the "pay provider" payment option.
	Note: Please contact your software vendor if you are unsure of how to apply these intervention codes.

Adjudication and payment of claims submitted during service interruption

When PharmaNet is restored, all batched claims—including those for emergency 3-day supplies—will adjudicate and PharmaNet will send the usual adjudication responses based on the patient's actual PharmaCare plan eligibility.

Please note: If necessary, please contact your software vendor to ensure claims entered into your local system during the service interruption are submitted once PharmaNet service resumes.

Dealing with adjudication responses

Claim Type	Processing Details	Actions
3-day emergency supply claims	These claims initially will be adjudicated based on the patient's actual eligibility for PharmaCare coverage. At a later date, PharmaCare will identify all claims for emergency 3-day supplies using the intervention codes above and will top up the pharmacy payment to 100% of the maximum drug cost and maximum dispensing fee, *regardless of the patient's actual plan eligibility*. The resulting adjustments will be reflected in the **August 6, 2013,** payment.	If any claim for an emergency 3-day supply was not successfully submitted, please contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk by **5:00 pm, Friday, July 19, 2013**. This will ensure all claims are identifiable for later re-adjudication.
Plan C (B.C. Income Assistance) and Plan G (No-Charge Psychiatric Medication) claims	These claims will be adjudicated based on the patient's eligibility in PharmaNet at the time of service resumption.	If a claim does not adjudicate as expected, please contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk.
All other claims	These claims will adjudicate as usual when PharmaNet service resumes.	If a claim does not adjudicate as expected, please contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk.

Using the PharmaCare Formulary Search

The Formulary Search will be up-to-date as of **July 3, 2013**, and no changes to PharmaCare drug coverage will be made until after PharmaNet service resumes.

Refer to the highlighted fields below to determine a DIN's coverage status and Special Authority requirements. A DIN that is covered by PharmaCare will have entries in both the **Max. Day Supply per fill** and **Maximum PharmaCare covers**. These fields will be blank, or show 0.00 or NB, if PharmaCare does not cover the drug.

PharmaCare Formulary Search Results

Click on the DIN/PIN/NPN to show details for the product.

The amount PharmaCare actually pays depends on PharmaCare coverage rules and PharmaCare plan rules.

Products found: 9								
DIN/PIN/NPN ⇕	Generic Name ⇕	Brand Name, Strength & Dosage Form ⇕	Manufacturer ⇕	RDP	Max. Day Supply per fill	Maximum PharmaCare Covers ⇕	Unit	Special Authority Needed
00021695	PREDNISONE	Novo-Prednisone 5mg 5 MG TABLET	NOVOPHARM LTD	No	100	0.0433	Each	No
00232378	PREDNISONE	Novo-Prednisone Tab 50mg 50 MG TABLET	NOVOPHARM LTD	No	100	0.1874	Each	No