

BC PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

Edition 23-008: August 2023

The PharmaCare Newsletter team works from the territory of the Lekwungen People, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. Our gratitude extends to them, and all Indigenous Peoples on whose territories and lands we build relationships.

BC PharmaCare counts on pharmacies and device providers to practice cultural safety and humility. To learn more, read Coming Together for Wellness, a series of articles by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and PharmaCare, and consider taking the San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety course.

The PharmaCare Newsletter is published by the Pharmaceutical, Laboratory & Blood Services Division to provide information to B.C.'s healthcare providers.

www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacarepharmacists
www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacareprescribers
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Flash glucose monitor added to PharmaCare formulary

On August 1, 2023, PharmaCare added a flash glucose monitor (FGM), the FreeStyle® Libre 2, to its formulary. With this addition, PharmaCare now provides coverage for both a FGM and a continuous glucose monitor (CGM), the Dexcom® G6. The FreeStyle Libre 2 and the Dexcom G6 are both PharmaCare limited coverage benefits that require Special Authority approval for coverage.

The FreeStyle Libre 2 uses an externally worn glucose sensor that's inserted under the skin behind a person's upper arm. When the sensor is "flashed" or scanned with a reader device or compatible smartphone, it transmits real-time information to the user. A sensor can be worn continuously for up to 14 days.

PharmaCare currently covers approximately 13,000 patients for the Dexcom G6, and some of these patients may switch to the FreeStyle Libre 2. Some new patients may also begin using a glucose monitor now that the FreeStyle Libre 2 is a PharmaCare benefit.

PharmaCare will monitor the utilization of the Dexcom G6 and the FreeStyle Libre 2. Any changes to funding or coverage policies will be communicated in the PharmaCare newsletter.

Special Authority

Coverage for the FreeStyle Libre 2 will be available to people who

- Have diabetes mellitus
- Meet the [Special Authority criteria](#)
- Are covered by Plan C, F, or W or Fair PharmaCare
 - The amount of Fair PharmaCare coverage depends on whether a patient has met their annual deductible and family maximum

Initial Special Authority approval is for 1 year. Prescribers can then submit a second request, which, if approved, will last for 5 years.

Patients who currently have PharmaCare coverage for the Dexcom G6 will be automatically eligible for coverage of the FreeStyle Libre 2 also. A new Special Authority request is not required.

Once approved, patients may choose either the FGM or the CGM per fill but cannot be covered for both at the same time.

Blood glucose test strips (BGTS)

FGMs do not require the patient to prick their finger to test glucose levels using blood glucose test strips (BGTS). However, people using FGMs sometimes need to test with a strip if their symptoms don't match the monitor reading, or if their monitor is showing an error code. PharmaCare covers up to 200 BGTS annually for FGM users. Children using an FGM may qualify for additional strips.

PINs

Product	PIN
FreeStyle® Libre 2 sensor	43120004
FreeStyle® Libre 2 reader	43120005

More information

- [FreeStyle Libre 2 Special Authority criteria](#)
- [July 2021 PharmaCare Newsletter \(PDF\)](#) – article announcing coverage for Dexcom G6
- [B.C. government news release Aug 1, 2023](#)
- [PharmaCare diabetes supplies](#)
- [Diabetes product PINs](#)

PharmaCare and health authorities align formulary listings

PharmaCare and the six provincial health authorities (HAs) have developed a joint drug review process to ensure patients have timely access to high quality, appropriate and cost-effective pharmaceutical therapies and services. The new joint process includes an evidence-informed medicine review, in addition to coordinated listing, planning and budgeting steps.

Drugs of interest to the HAs – for use in hospitals, for instance – will use the new joint process. Other drugs will be evaluated through [existing processes](#).

Benefits of this new aligned review process include:

- Pooled resources, including receiving patient input through [Your Voice](#) and clinical input from throughout the province
- Reduced duplication of work
- Joint price negotiations
- Improved continuity of patient care when transitioning between HA care and community care

This is the outcome of a 2019/2020 Deputy Minister of Health mandate to develop and implement an evidence-informed joint drug review process. PharmaCare and the HAs will pilot the new process to evaluate its effectiveness and adjust as needed to ensure its success.

Scope of Practice Corner

MACS and telepharmacies

Pharmacists at central sites of telepharmacies can assess and prescribe for minor ailments or contraception and claim the MACS fee if they provide a face-to-face consultation through real-time, audio-video conferencing technology for patients who attend the remote site of the telepharmacy in person. This policy is only applicable to community pharmacies with a telepharmacy licence issued by the College of Pharmacists of BC.

MACS and offsite pharmacy care

A pharmacist can assess and prescribe for minor ailments or contraception and claim the MACS fee if they provide a consultation outside of the pharmacy (for example, as part of an in-home visit) and if the following conditions are met:

- The prescribing pharmacist is an employee or independent contractor of a PharmaCare-enrolled pharmacy that has PharmaNet access
- The pharmacist checks PharmaNet while physically at the pharmacy before the offsite visit
 - If a pharmacist working offsite needs to re-check PharmaNet, they may call their pharmacy and request that someone onsite check PharmaNet for them
 - No offsite (remote) access to PharmaNet is permitted
- The pharmacist submits the claim at the PharmaCare-enrolled pharmacy on the day of the MACS assessment
- All other eligibility criteria for MACS are met, including that the patient self-identifies as having a contraception need or a minor ailment listed under Schedule A of the Pharmacists Regulation, and the patient initiates a request for MACS

MACS monitoring and evaluation update

The Ministry is conducting ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Minor Ailments and Contraception Service (MACS), including assessing service uptake by patients, pharmacies and pharmacists.

Between the June 1, 2023, MACS launch and July 11, 2023:

- More than 43,500 services were completed
- More than 40,400 patients were assessed
- More than 1,200 pharmacies participated
- More than 3,000 pharmacists provided the service
- The greatest number of assessments were for:
 - Urinary tract infections
 - Contraception
 - Allergic rhinitis
 - Conjunctivitis
 - Dermatitis

The Ministry extends its heartfelt appreciation to pharmacists for their ongoing contributions to the success of implementing MACS.

For more information, including monitoring updates, refer to [Pharmacist scope of practice](#) and [Monitoring and evaluation](#).

PharmaCare website user survey

The PharmaCare website survey is open!

This new survey seeks input from health professionals to identify the parts of the PharmaCare website that are working well and any that need improvement.

The survey is open for two months until October 1, 2023. Visit [PharmaCare website survey](#) to provide your feedback.

Thank you for helping make the PharmaCare website even better!

COVID-19 news

Antiviral support line for clinicians closes

Due to low call volumes and increased clinician familiarity with available antivirals, the COVID-19 Antiviral Support Line for Clinicians closed on July 31, 2023.

For information about Paxlovid, consult the product monograph, the [BCCDC guidance documents](#) or other trusted clinical resources.

For questions about Paxlovid billing or the PAX-A fee, call PharmaCare's provider-only help line: 1-800-554-0225

Clinical trial seeking participants

B.C. residents who do not qualify for publicly funded Paxlovid may be eligible to participate in a new clinical trial.

CanTreatCOVID is a non-profit study supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. The study aims to identify effective and affordable medications to treat COVID-19 and prevent complications.

The study is open to adults who have tested positive for COVID with new symptoms that started in the past 5 days and who are either

- Age 18 to 49 with at least one chronic condition OR
- Age 50+

Eligible participants who participate in the study will

- Take a COVID medication approved by Health Canada OR follow public health advice
- Complete an online diary for two weeks
- Complete four surveys over 36 weeks
- Receive a modest monetary remuneration for each follow-up

Participation is voluntary. Details, including a short screening questionnaire, are available at <https://cantreatcovid.org/>. Health practitioners are encouraged to inform patients and clients about this opportunity.

Reminders

14-day Plan C coverage for emergency evacuees

With the 2023 wildfire season upon us, pharmacists are reminded that 14-day emergency Plan C coverage is available for people evacuated from their homes due to natural disasters such as fires and floods.

To be eligible, evacuees must attest that they urgently need the medication and are facing financial hardship due to an evacuation. BC Emergency Support Services (ESS) will distribute the Emergency BC PharmaCare Coverage for B.C. Evacuees form (HLTH 5440) to evacuees when appropriate. This form is not available online; it must be obtained through ESS.

Evacuees will complete the form by entering their:

- Contact information
- PHN
- Signature, confirming they
 - have been evacuated from their home by ESS
 - are experiencing financial hardship due to the evacuation
 - have an urgent need for medication

Evacuees present the completed form at a community pharmacy to request their medication.

When a pharmacist receives the form, they enter their College ID on the form and call Health Insurance BC to activate 14-day Plan C coverage. Additional instructions are on the form. Retain the form in pharmacy records with the associated prescription documentation.

All PharmaNet PINs in one place

In May 2023, we created a new web page to house ALL the PharmaNet PINs in response to a pharmacist's suggestion. From MACS to IUDs, compounds to MAiD, the [amalgamated PINs page](#) has you covered!

RAT kit payment update

PharmaCare pays pharmacies for RAT kit distribution as part of the first regular provider payment each month. Payments have a two-month delay and appear on the Pharmacy Remittance Advice Form under adjustment code 7 – Manual Payment. One payment will be made this month:

Month of distribution	Date paid
May 2023	August 8, 2023

PharmaCare-enrolled pharmacies receive \$75 for each case of RAT kits distributed and entered with the PIN:

- 66128325 for a BTNX case

- 66128338 for an Artron case

Resources

- [2023 PharmaCare provider payment schedule \(PDF\)](#)
- [COVID-19 information for pharmacies](#)

Formulary and listing updates

Limited Coverage benefit: sodium phenylbutyrate and ursodoxicoltaurine

PharmaCare has added the following Limited Coverage drug to the PharmaCare drug list. Special Authority approval is required for coverage.

Drug name	sodium phenylbutyrate and ursodoxicoltaurine (Albrioza™)		
Date effective	July 19, 2023		
Indication	treatment of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)		
DIN	02527707	Strength & form	3 g sodium phenylbutyrate / 1 g ursodoxicoltaurine per sachet; powder for oral suspension

Non-benefits: estradiol-progesterone, pancrelipase

Pharmacare has determined the following will be non-benefits.

Drug name	estradiol-progesterone (Bijuva®)		
Date effective	July 6, 2023		
Indication	treatment of moderate to severe vasomotor symptoms associated with menopause in women with an intact uterus		
DINs	02505215 02505223	Strength & form	0.5 mg estradiol /100 mg progesterone and 1 mg estradiol /100 mg progesterone oral capsules

Drug name	pancrelipase (Pancrease™ MT)		
Date effective	July 25, 2023		
Indication	treatment of pancreatic insufficiency due to pancreatic disease		
DINs	02503433 02503441	Strength & form	delayed-release oral capsules



PharmaNet has been linking health professionals to a provincewide, centralized data system since 1995.

Your Voice: Input needed for drug decisions

The knowledge and experience of patients, caregivers and patient groups is integral to [B.C.'s drug review process](#). If you know someone who is taking one of the drugs below or who has a condition any of the drugs treats, please encourage them to visit www.gov.bc.ca/BCyourvoice. Your Voice is now accepting input on the following drugs:

Drug	Indication	Input window
setmelanotide (Imcivree®)	Weight management in patients 6 years of age and older with obesity due to Bardet-Biedl syndrome (BBS)	July 26 to August 22 at 11:59 pm
dupilumab (Dupixent®)	Atopic dermatitis in patients aged 6 months to 12 years	July 26 to August 22 at 11:59 pm

Special edition, August 9, 2023

Pharmacies must register as PharmaNet sites in PRIME by end of August

B.C. community pharmacies must register their existing licensed pharmacy locations as PharmaNet sites in PRIME by August 31, 2023. All new sites must be registered before any health professional accesses PharmaNet at the site.

Site registration for pharmacies launched on August 1, 2023 for existing and new PharmaNet sites. By August 8, about 450 pharmacies had either started their registration or submitted it for review.

By registering sites in PRIME, pharmacies request Ministry of Health approval to access [PharmaNet](#), which is required under the Information Management Regulation. All healthcare professionals accessing PharmaNet at any site must first be enrolled in PRIME.

A PharmaNet access site is a physical address in combination with a PharmaNet software vendor. If an organization that owns/operates community pharmacies has multiple physical locations, they have multiple sites. Each pharmacy location can use only one PharmaNet vendor.

Details and guides

The PharmaCare website has several resources to help you register your PharmaNet site(s):

- Learn more: [Pharmacy access to PharmaNet](#) – What you need to register, who can register, step-by-step guide to the PRIME application
 - [Register a site](#)
- Learn more: [PRIME enrolment – health professionals](#) – What you need to register, step guide
 - [Enrol in PRIME](#)

Prosthetic and orthotic device providers

Device providers (solely) are also required to register their sites. They will receive an email about how to register their sites.