

BC PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

Edition 24-012: December 2024

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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
www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacaredeviceproviders



Denosumab for osteoporosis: two important updates

The current edition of [PAD Refills](#) contains important updates to clinical evidence and PharmaCare coverage of denosumab. Make sure to [subscribe](#) so you don't miss out on news and updates!



Vaccination remittance payments

In October and November, a transfer issue of vaccination records from ImmsBC to PharmaNet resulted in claims not being processed. As a result, a number of vaccination claims documented in ImmsBC were not reimbursed.

We apologize for the interruption in payments. The Ministry is working to issue payments for these vaccinations in early 2025.

Resources

- [Publicly funded vaccines web page](#) for vaccine PINs, DINs
- [Drug administration fee](#)

Reminder: Pharmacists must register with labs before making test referrals

Pharmacists intending to refer patients for laboratory tests are reminded to register with laboratory operators after receiving their MSP practitioner number from Health Insurance BC (HIBC). The simple one-page [pharmacist registration form](#) gathers your contact information, pharmacy hours, and new MSP practitioner number.

Pharmacists must register **before** ordering laboratory tests. Registration allows laboratories to distribute test results and bill for testing. If a pharmacist makes a referral without being registered, there is a high risk they will not receive the test results, or the patient may be turned away at the collection site.

The [pharmacist registration form](#) is posted by Provincial Laboratory Medicine Services. For detailed instructions on how pharmacists can get set up to refer for laboratory tests, visit [Pharmacists ordering lab tests](#) and [Requirements for laboratory test referrals](#). You may also want register for the new UBC Continuing Pharmacy Professional Development (CPPD) course, Introduction to Ordering and Interpretation of Laboratory Tests (refer to next article).

Resources

- [Pharmacist registration form – Provincial Laboratory Medicine Services](#)
- [Pharmacists ordering lab tests](#)
- [Requirements for laboratory test referrals](#)

MSP number mail-out delay

Due to Canada Post strike, the mail-out of MSP numbers may be delayed.

Pharmacists can contact HIBC at 604-456-6950 (Lower Mainland) or 1-866-456-6950 (rest of B.C.) for status updates on MSP numbers.

New UBC CPPD course on ordering and interpreting lab tests

UBC Continuing Pharmacy Professional Development (CPPD) is launching a new course called Introduction to Ordering and Interpretation of Laboratory Tests on January 15, 2025.

This free, accredited, online course will include:

- In-depth study of the fundamentals of ordering and interpreting lab tests
- Practical exercises with real-life scenarios
- Expert guidance from experienced pharmacy professionals

More information on content, instructors and enrolment will be available in early January at [Programs – UBC CPPD](#).

Resources

- [Programs – UBC CPPD](#)

Expected Paxlovid shortage ends

On November 19, 2024, Pfizer announced that the anticipated shortage of Paxlovid® has been resolved, and the affected formulations are now available through wholesalers.

Concerns arose in early October regarding a potential temporary shortage of 150/100 mg tablets in blisters of 30 (DIN 2524031) and renal packs of 150/100 mg in blisters of 20 (DIN 2527804) due to increased demand. However, with resupply efforts completed, the shortage has been resolved.

Subscribe to [Drug shortages](#) to stay up to date on drug shortage advisories and mitigations.

Resources

- [Drug Shortages](#)
- [Paxlovid – information for health professionals](#)

PharmaCare contact information poster

The [PharmaCare Help Desk](#) provides support for pharmacists.

The [Medical Practitioner Line](#) provides support for prescribers.

Both services record, monitor, and resolve problems in a timely manner. (Desk representatives do not answer questions about specific medical conditions or treatment.)

Print and display the [PharmaCare Help Desk poster \(PDF, 54KB\)](#) for easy reference. **Numbers are for providers only. They should not be given to or in view of the public.**

The poster is divided into two main sections: 'PHARMACARE HELP DESK' for pharmacists and 'MEDICAL PRACTITIONER LINE' for prescribers. It includes contact numbers, service hours, and a list of services provided. A 'Click and print' button is visible on the right side of the poster.

RAT kit payment update

Since the last newsletter, PharmaCare has paid pharmacies for COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kit distribution as follows:

Payment month	Payment date
September 2024	December 2, 2024

Pharmacies are paid \$75 for each case of RAT kits distributed, and pharmacists are reminded to enter the correct PIN for each case of RAT kits distributed.

- BTNX: 66128325
- Artron: 66128338

Resources

- [2024 PharmaCare Provider Payment Schedule \(PDF, 165KB\)](#)

2024 year-end reminders

PharmaNet Help Desk holiday closure

The PharmaNet Help Desk will be closed from 10:15 pm on Tuesday, December 24 until 10:15 pm on Wednesday, December 25, 2024.

If you experience problems connecting to PharmaNet during this time, please call 778-875-4287. The interactive voice response system will be available.

Fair PharmaCare registration holiday closure

To allow for annual maintenance, the Application for Health and Drug Coverage (AHDC) for MSP and Fair PharmaCare will be unavailable as follows:

- Online applications unavailable:
 - 8 am, Tuesday, December 31 - 8 am, Wednesday, January 1, 2025 (24 hours)
- Phone applications unavailable:
 - 8 am, Tuesday, December 24 to 8 am Thursday, December 26, 2024 (48 hours)
 - 8 am, Tuesday, December 31 to 8 am, Thursday, January 2, 2025 (48 hours)

2025 provider payment schedule

The weekly and monthly provider payment schedule for 2025 is available on our [Information for pharmacies web page](#). Pharmacies should note that payments may be remitted earlier than dates indicated in the schedule. Published dates remain the authorized payment dates and should be the guide for claims-related accounting.

- [2025 PharmaCare Provider Payment Schedule \(PDF, 120KB\)](#)

Blood glucose test strip annual quantity limits

On January 1, 2025, clients will be assigned their [annual limit of blood glucose test strips \(BGTS\)](#). Beginning January 1, please ensure you use the [regular BGTS PINs](#) for claims until clients exceed their annual limit.

All strips purchased by a patient, regardless of the payer, count toward the client's annual limit.

BGTS information for clients

Information for the public is available online about [annual quantity limits for BGTS](#) and in the printable information sheet, [Blood glucose test strips – annual limits \(PDF, 167KB\)](#). (Translations are available in 15 languages on the [PharmaCare information sheets web page](#)).

- [Blood glucose testing](#) – annual limits, criteria for additional strips, for health professionals
- [BGTS PINs](#)
- [Blood glucose test strips – patient information sheet \(PDF, 167KB\)](#)
- [Annual quantity limits for BGTS](#) – web page for the public

Fair PharmaCare annual deductibles reset in the new year

On January 1, 2025, PharmaNet will be updated with 2025 annual deductible and family maximum amounts. Deductible accumulations will be reset to zero.

Fair PharmaCare coverage levels for 2025 are based on a family's 2023 net income. Income from Universal Child Care Benefits and Registered Disability Savings Plans and some BC Housing subsidies are not included when determining coverage levels.

Deductible information for patients

This can be a stressful time for Fair PharmaCare beneficiaries as many are paying the full cost of their drugs. Please let them know that they may be eligible for PharmaCare's [monthly deductible payment plan](#). Once they register, PharmaCare immediately pays for 70% of their eligible drug costs. Fair PharmaCare registrants can get information about their deductible and family maximum by:

- Requesting a [confirmation of Fair PharmaCare coverage](#) letter or
- Calling us Monday to Friday, 8 am to 8 pm and Saturdays 8 am to 4 pm from the Lower Mainland at 604-683-7151 or from the rest of B.C., toll-free, at 1-800-663-7100

DEDUCTIBLE RESET

Remind your patients that they can pay their Fair PharmaCare deductible in monthly instalments!
PharmaCare pays 70% of eligible drug costs right away – as if they have already met their deductible. Patients can call 1-800-663-7100 to ask if they are eligible!

Formulary and listing updates

Limited coverage benefits: mirikizumab (Omvoh[®]), mavacamten (Camzyos[®]), atogepant (Qulipta[®])

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

Drug name	mirikizumab (Omvoh[®])
Date	November 19, 2024
Indication	Adult patients with moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis (UC) who have had an inadequate response, loss of response, or were intolerant to conventional therapy, a biologic treatment, or a janus kinase (JAK)-inhibitor.

DIN	02539861	Strength & form	300 mg/15 mL vial
	02539853		100 mg/1 mL pre-filled syringe
	02539845		100 mg/1 mL pre-filled pen

Drug name	mavacamten (Camzyos®)		
Date	November 26, 2024		
Indication	For the treatment of symptomatic obstructive hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (oHCM) of New York Heart Association (NYHA) Class II-III in adult patients.		
DIN	02532549	Strength & form	2.5 mg capsule
	02532557		5 mg capsule
	02532565		10 mg capsule
	02532573		15 mg capsule

Drug name	atogepant (Qulipta®)		
Date	December 3, 2024		
Indication	For the prevention of episodic and chronic migraine in adults.		
DIN	02533979	Strength & form	10 mg tablet
	02533987		30 mg tablet
	02533995		60 mg tablet

Non-benefits: avatrombopag (Doptelet®), cenobamate (Xcopri™)

PharmaCare has decided not to cover the following drug for the noted indication.

Drug name	avatrombopag (Doptelet®)		
Date	November 7, 2024		
Indication	For the treatment of thrombocytopenia in adult patients with chronic immune thrombocytopenia (ITP) who have had an insufficient response to a previous treatment.		
DIN	02542706	Strength & form	20 mg tablet

Drug name	cenobamate (Xcopri™)		
Date	November 14, 2024		
Indication	Adjunctive therapy for management of partial-onset seizures (POS) in adults with epilepsy who are not satisfactorily controlled with conventional therapy.		
DIN	02538652 02538660 02538725 02538733 02538741 02538768	Strength & form	12.5 mg tablet 25 mg tablet 50 mg tablet 100 mg tablet 150 mg tablet 200 mg tablet

EDRD coverage: berotralstat (Orladeyo®), expansion of coverage for elexacaftor/tezacaftor/ivacaftor (Trikafta®)

Expensive drugs for rare diseases (EDRDs) are drugs that treat uncommon diseases and have a very high per-patient cost. EDRDs are PharmaCare non-benefits, but some drugs and patients may be eligible for coverage on a last-resort case-by-case basis through the EDRD process. Visit [Exceptional funding for EDRDs](#) for more information.

Drug name	berotralstat (Orladeyo®)		
Date	November 7, 2024		
Indication	Hereditary angioedema		
DIN	02527693	Strength & form	150 mg capsule

Effective November 7, 2024, the Ministry of Health initiated funding of berotralstat (Orladeyo®) through PharmaCare's EDRD process. Clinicians may apply for funding through this process for eligible patients with type 1 or 2 hereditary angioedema. Berotralstat will be distributed through Innomar pharmacies.

Initial applications will be approved for up to six months. The prescribing physician is responsible for requesting continued Ministry funding.

Drug name	elexacaftor/tezacaftor/ivacaftor (Trikafta®)		
Date	November 6, 2024		
Indication	Treatment of cystic fibrosis in patients aged two years and older who have at least one mutation in the cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator (CFTR) gene that is responsive to Trikafta based on clinical and/or in vitro data.		
DIN	02517140 02526670 02542277 02542285	Strength & form	elexacaftor 100mg/tezacaftor 50mg/ivacaftor 75mg and ivacaftor 150mg oral tablet elexacaftor 50mg/tezacaftor 25mg/ivacaftor 37.5mg and ivacaftor 75mg oral tablet

			<p>elexacaftor 100mg/tezacaftor 50mg/ivacaftor 75mg and ivacaftor 75mg oral granules</p> <p>elexacaftor 80mg/tezacaftor 40mg/ivacaftor 60mg and ivacaftor 59.5mg oral granules</p>
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As of November 6, 2024, Pharmacare's EDRD process has expanded coverage of Trikafta for cystic fibrosis patients. Before this date, Trikafta was covered for eligible patients aged 2 and older if they have at least one F508Del mutation. Now patients who are aged 2 and older will also be eligible for coverage if they have at least one mutation in the cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator gene that is responsive based on clinical and/or in vitro data. A full list of eligible mutations is available in the [product monograph \(PDF, 717KB\)](#).

Trikafta is packaged as a 28-day supply of tablets or oral granules. As Trikafta is dosed twice daily, a 28-day supply consists of 56 tablets or 56 packages of oral granules. PharmaCare limits supply to 28 days. Refer to PharmaCare Policy Manual [Section 3.18 – Claims for Drug Cost Exceeding \\$9999.99](#) for claims information.

Approved claims are usually fully covered by PharmaCare or shared with the patient's third-party insurer. PharmaCare doesn't cover any markup on Trikafta but will cover a dispensing fee.

Trikafta is distributed through McKesson Specialty and cannot be ordered through the McKesson/PharmaClik system. If your pharmacy hasn't already done so, it may need to open an account with McKesson Specialty. They can be reached by email at mckesson.specializeddistribution@mckesson.ca or by phone at 1-877-827-1306. Due to the high cost of Trikafta, the Ministry of Health recommends that pharmacies bill PharmaCare or the patient's third-party insurer before ordering the medication from McKesson Specialty. Pharmacies should also confirm pickup of the drug with the patient.

Ensure EDRD patients are charged public price for Trikafta

When ordering Trikafta for an EDRD-covered patient, pharmacies should be sure to provide the EDRD Patient ID to McKesson Specialized Distribution to ensure that they are charged the public price (\$23,520/28-day supply). If McKesson doesn't have the ID, they will charge the pharmacy the higher private price (for patients covered by third-party insurance), and it will appear that PharmaCare is not covering the full amount. If a pharmacy is incorrectly charged the higher amount for an EDRD-covered patient, the pharmacy should contact McKesson to have it resolved.

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 treat, please encourage them to visit www.gov.bc.ca/BCyourvoice.

Your Voice is now accepting input on the following drugs:

Drug	Indication	Input window
faricimab (Vabysmo™)	macular edema secondary to retinal vein occlusion (RVO)	November 20 to December 17 at 11:59 pm
garadacimab (Andembry®)	hereditary angioedema (HAE) in adult and pediatric patients aged 12 years and older	November 20 to December 17 at 11:59 pm
pegcetacoplan (TBC)	geographic atrophy (GA) secondary to age-related macular degeneration (AMD) in adults	November 20 to December 17 at 11:59 pm



Did you know?

Since 1995, individuals with cystic fibrosis who are registered with a provincial cystic fibrosis clinic receive coverage of eligible digestive enzymes under Plan D. PharmaCare pays 100% of the drug cost and the dispensing fee, up to PharmaCare accepted maximums.

Read [PharmaCare Trends 2022/2023 \(PDF, 1MB\)](#) for more details.