

# BC PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

Edition 23-007: July 4, 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.

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**pad Refills**

Your dose of drug information in between details

**Q:** If lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse®) is a prodrug of dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine®), are there any important differences between them?

**A:** The answer is in the current edition of [PAD Refills](#). Make sure to subscribe so you don't miss out on news and updates!

## MACS news

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### Plan W OTC items

If pharmacists recommend a Plan W over-the-counter (OTC) item as part of a Minor Ailments and Contraceptive Service (MACS) visit, they are not required to complete a Plan W OTC Recommendation form.

Pharmacists should:

- Document the recommended items on the MACS form *only*
- Claim the medications in PharmaNet so that Plan W covers them

Pharmacists are reminded that Plan W covers a variety of OTC items that can be recommended as part of MACS or during a regular pharmacy visit. If Plan W OTC items are recommended outside of MACS, pharmacists should continue to use the Plan W OTC Recommendation form and enter the medication in PharmaNet.

Ensuring Plan W coverage of OTC items for FNHA clients is a component of culturally safe pharmacy practice.

### Resources

- [MACS Form \(PDF\)](#)
- [First Nations Health Benefits \(Plan W\): Over-the-counter drugs](#)
- [Plan W OTC Recommendation form \(PDF\)](#)

### New educational opportunities

UBC's Continuing Pharmacy Professional Development (CPPD) program recently added the following free accredited courses and presentations to support the Minor Ailments and Contraception Service (MACS).

- [Allergic Rhinitis](#)
- [Urinary Tract Infections \(UTIs\) – Simple answers to burning questions](#)
- [Contraception Part I – Hormonal Contraception, Long-Acting Reversible Contraception and Permanent Contraception](#)
- [Contraception Part II – Emergency Contraception](#)

Pharmacists already have access to accredited learning opportunities such as [medSask's Minor ailment and self-care guidelines](#) through the BC Pharmacy Association and [modules on specific minor ailments](#) through UBC CPPD. More than 2,300 pharmacists have already registered for [CPPD's Prescribing for Minor Ailments – Introduction](#) module.

Also, free facilitated virtual workshops on treating nicotine dependence are available. Participants must complete both Session 1 and Session 2 to receive a certificate of completion. Visit [QuitNow](#) for details, workshop dates, and to register.

Pharmacists are encouraged to enroll in these programs and to continue seeking other educational opportunities and resources to support their participation in MACS.

## Resources

- [UBC CPPD Professional Development Courses for Pharmacists](#)
- [medSask's Minor ailment and self-care guidelines](#)
- [QuitNow virtual workshops](#)

## Early data

Between June 1 and June 27, 2023:

- More than 27,000 Minor Ailment and Contraception Service (MACS) assessments were completed
- More than 25,000 patients were assessed
- Almost 1,200 pharmacies participated
- More than 2,700 pharmacists provided a service
- Top assessments included:
  - uncomplicated urinary tract infections
  - allergic rhinitis
  - contraception
  - conjunctivitis
  - dermatitis

Monitoring activities for the service are ongoing. Pharmacists are commended for the successful launch of this well-received program!

## PINs and intervention code reminders

PharmaCare would like to provide the following reminders about MACS claims.

- When entering a claim for MACS, put the pharmacy phone number at the beginning of the SIG field
- Only use the PS (Professional Care Service) intervention code when dispensing a **Schedule 1 drug** (not when submitting MACS PINs or recommending Schedule 2, 3, or unscheduled drugs)
- Select the correct PIN for "Rx" or "no Rx" when submitting a drug claim through PharmaNet

**Examples of correct procedures**

Assessment and prescribing		Claims and dispensing		
Ailment and recommendation	Prescription issued?	MACS PIN	PharmaNet dispensing	Intervention code
Emergency contraception: levonorgestrel recommended	No prescription; levonorgestrel is not a Schedule 1 drug	PA contraception – no Rx 98890015	Levonorgestrel entered into PharmaNet for billing purposes	None; drug is not Schedule 1
Emergency contraception: ulipristal recommended	Prescription issued for ulipristal	PA contraception – Rx 98890013	Dispense ulipristal in PharmaNet	'PS' intervention code; ulipristal is a Schedule 1 drug
Pinworms – pyrantel recommended	No prescription; pyrantel is not a Schedule 1 drug	PA pinworms – no Rx 98890075	None; pyrantel is not a Schedule 1 drug and is not eligible for coverage	None; not entered into PharmaNet
Musculoskeletal pain – acetaminophen recommended	No prescription; acetaminophen is not a Schedule 1 drug	PA MSK pain – no Rx 98890063	For Plan W patient, enter into PharmaNet for billing purposes	None; drug is not Schedule 1

**It's (almost) PRIME time for sites**

Beginning August 1, 2023, all community pharmacies must register in PRIME as “sites” to continue having access to PharmaNet. Pharmacies must complete their registration by August 31, 2023, to secure ongoing access to PharmaNet.

The Ministry of Health will contact pharmacy managers or staff responsible for site registration in the coming weeks to provide additional information and instructions. Please ensure your contact information with the College of Pharmacists of BC is up to date.

Email [PRIMESupport@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PRIMESupport@gov.bc.ca) with any questions.



## THERAPEUTICS INITIATIVE LETTER

[Therapeutics Letter 143](#) describes the negative effects medication use can have on the environment and steps clinicians and patients can take to mitigate them. A [webinar on climate-conscious inhaler prescribing](#) is also available.

## 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 was made since the last PharmaCare newsletter:

Month of distribution	Date paid
April 2023	July 4, 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 pharmacists](#)

## Be heat aware – resources for staff and clients

With above-average temperatures expected this summer, pharmacists may want to share the following resources with colleagues and clients about how to stay cool and safe in hot weather.

- The Ministry of Health’s poster [Medications and Heat \(PDF\)](#) shows which medications increase sensitivity to heat
- The article [Protecting your clients from extreme heat](#), in the BC Pharmacy Association’s Spring 2023 edition of *The Tablet*, has excellent tips on how pharmacists can protect clients from the impacts of extreme heat
- HealthLink BC’s [Beat the heat](#) and [Medicines That Increase the Chance for a Heat-Related Illness](#) pages provide helpful information

- The B.C. government is also offering free air conditioner units to certain populations this summer. Read more at [Province launches new initiative to protect people during extreme heat emergencies](#)

## Formulary and listing updates

### Expensive Drugs for Rare Diseases: givosiran

PharmaCare has initiated funding for givosiran through its Expensive Drugs for Rare Diseases (EDRD) process. All therapies under the EDRD process are considered for funding on a case-by-case basis.

Clinicians may now apply for funding for givosiran (Givlaari™) for eligible adult patients with acute hepatic porphyria.

Initial approval is for up to 12 months. The prescribing physician can request continued funding after that. Visit [Exceptional funding of EDRDs](#) for more information. Givosiran is distributed and dispensed through Innomar pharmacies.

<b>Drug name</b>	givosiran (Givlaari™)		
<b>Date effective</b>	June 22, 2023		
<b>Indication</b>	treatment of acute hepatic porphyria in adults		
<b>DIN</b>	2506343	<b>Strength &amp; form</b>	189 mg/mL solution for SC injection

### Limited Coverage benefit – somatropin

As of July 4, 2023, PharmaCare will begin covering Norditropin® **FlexPro™** brand [somatropin](#) in a prefilled pen device, with the same Limited Coverage criteria as Norditropin **NordiFlex™** prefilled pens. PharmaCare will continue to provide coverage of the Nordiflex products until their expected discontinuation in 2024.

<b>Drug name</b>	somatropin (Norditropin® FlexPro™)		
<b>Date effective</b>	July 4, 2023		
<b>Indication</b>	treatment of patients 20 years and younger with growth hormone deficiency		
<b>DINs</b>	2529181 2529203 2529211	<b>Strength &amp; form</b>	5 mg/1.5 mL prefilled pen 10 mg/1.5 mL prefilled pen 15 mg/1.5 mL prefilled pen

### U.S. exchange rate update

The exchange rate on PharmaCare's price list for prosthetic and orthotic components has been updated. Effective June 20, 2023, the new rate is

**\$1.3241**

## 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 have a patient who is taking one of the drugs below or who has the condition the drug treats, please encourage them to visit [www.gov.bc.ca/BCyourvoice](http://www.gov.bc.ca/BCyourvoice). We are now accepting input on the following drugs:

<b>Drug</b>	mirikizumab
<b>Indication</b>	ulcerative colitis in adults
<b>Input window</b>	Jun 28 to July 25, 2023, at 11:59 pm

<b>Drug</b>	adalimumab biosimilars (Abrilada <sup>®</sup> , Amgevita <sup>®</sup> , Hadlima <sup>®</sup> , Hulio <sup>®</sup> , Hyrimoz <sup>®</sup> , Idacio <sup>®</sup> , Simlandi <sup>™</sup> , Yuflyma <sup>™</sup> )
<b>Indication</b>	Adult and pediatric active non-infectious uveitis
<b>Input window</b>	Jun 21 to July 19, 2023, at 11:59 pm

## PharmaCare Scripts

Did you resolve an interesting pharmacy case, or do you have a question about applying a PharmaCare policy? Share your story or inquiry with [PharmaCareNewsletter@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PharmaCareNewsletter@gov.bc.ca) and you could find it in a future PharmaCare Script.

### Plan W, MACS and OTCs

Steve has itchy eyes and a runny nose from seasonal allergies. He decides to go to Pharmacy ABC to request the Minor Ailments and Contraceptive Service (MACS) he saw on the news.

At the pharmacy, Emily, the pharmacist, tells Steve how the service works and that it is free for B.C. residents. Steve confirms that he wants to proceed with the service. Pharmacy ABC is mindful that some clients may appreciate a private space to discuss their personal values and medical history. Emily asks Steve if he'd like to chat in a private space, and Steve says he appreciates being asked, but he is comfortable at the counter for this consultation.

As Emily pulls up Steve's PharmaNet profile, she asks him if he's covered under a health benefits plan. Steve tells Emily that he has coverage through PharmaCare Plan W (First Nations Health Benefits), and he prefers a covered medication. Emily remembers that many over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are fully covered under Plan W. Emily reviews Steve's PharmaNet profile and assesses his medical and medication history. While reviewing his profile, Emily confirms that Steve is a Plan W beneficiary and notes this on his file for future reference.

Emily determines Steve's symptoms are not severe enough for a Schedule I drug and recommends an OTC drug from the list of [OTC medications covered by Plan W](#).

"Since the over-the-counter drug for this condition is covered under Plan W, you will not have to pay anything," says Emily, after providing all the information about the medication.

Steve agrees to try the medication for his seasonal allergies and thanks Emily for the recommendation and relevant information. Emily establishes and informs Steve of a follow-up and monitoring plan.

Emily reaches for the Plan W OTC Recommendation form but then remembers that the form is not needed if the drug is recommended as a result of MACS. Emily documents the OTC drug on the MACS form. She submits the claim for the MACS fee on PharmaNet and enters the OTC drug on PharmaNet for Plan W coverage.



Did you  
know?

B.C. residents of any age can book a MACS assessment.