

BC PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

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PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER IN HTML

Welcome to the inaugural [PharmaCare Newsletter in HTML](#) (Hypertext Markup Language).

Until today, the PharmaCare Newsletter was only available in a PDF (Portable Document Format), which requires external software such as Adobe Reader to open and read. The current newsletter issue will be available in both HTML and PDF. When a new newsletter issue is published, the previous newsletters will be available in PDF only.

Publishing the newsletter in HTML was driven by several factors. It's easier to view and navigate on any device, including mobile and tablet, it requires no external reader and it's accessible to people using screen readers. The conversion to HTML was in part prompted by the fact that more than half the visits to the B.C. government website are on mobile and tablet devices.

Comments and suggestions for improving the newsletter are always welcome. Please contact the PharmaCare communications team at PIPE.COMM@gov.bc.ca

The PharmaCare Newsletter is published by the Pharmaceutical Services Division to provide information to British Columbia's health care providers.

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.



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CRITICAL SHORTAGE: PROPYLTHIOURACIL (PTU)

There is no inventory currently available of propylthiouracil (PTU) at the manufacturer or distributor level, and the current manufacturer has discontinued the product. This shortage particularly impacts pregnant women with hyperthyroidism as it is the preferred thionamide to be used during pregnancy. PTU is also used by patients who might be allergic to or are severely intolerant of methimazole, and for whom access to radioiodine therapy or surgery is not available.

Health Canada is aware of the importance of this drug and is working on options to allow the importation of foreign manufactured products to meet demand. As a result of this work, an Australian PTU product was approved for import on June 18 under Health Canada's [list of drugs for exceptional importation and sale](#). However, the timeline for importation has not yet been confirmed.

In the meantime, pharmacists are urged to:

- Conserve supplies of PTU consistent with their patient needs
- Consider dispensing 30 days' supply per fill
- Share inventory with pharmacies that have patients requiring PTU, if they still have inventory but don't have patients on this medication
- Stay alert for new announcements and updates on this drug shortage

For up-to-date information on any drug shortages, consult [Drug Shortages Canada](#) or [PharmaCare Drug Shortage Information](#).

PRIME COMING SOON TO COMMUNITY PHARMACIES

The Ministry of Health will launch [PRIME](#) to community pharmacists in the coming months. PRIME is a streamlined, online application for health practitioners to request Ministry approval to use PharmaNet. It was rolled out to pharmacists and other health professionals working in community health practices in [May 2020](#).

Once PRIME is available, community pharmacists will need to enrol if they're using PharmaNet for the first time or joining a new pharmacy. This does **not** include pharmacies operated by a health authority. The dates for other pharmacists to enrol will be posted in a future newsletter.

Community pharmacies will also register with PRIME. Once PRIME is available, pharmacies will need to register if they're accessing PharmaNet for the first time or contracting a new PharmaNet software vendor. The schedule for other pharmacies to register will be posted in a future newsletter.

The terms of access that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians will sign in PRIME will replace the confidentiality undertakings they now sign.

PRIME has been implemented to improve the privacy and security of patient and practitioner information in PharmaNet, and to prepare for the upcoming legislated requirement for the Ministry of Health to grant access to each PharmaNet user. Follow the PharmaCare Newsletter for more about the PRIME onboarding schedule for community pharmacies. PRIME will eventually be opened to pharmacists in health authority settings and device providers as well.

NEW COVID-19 FAIR PHARMACARE INCOME REVIEW APPLICATION

A new Fair PharmaCare income review application is available to British Columbians who have lost income due to COVID-19. Fair PharmaCare income reviews have long been available to people whose income has dropped by 10% or more in the past two years. When applications are approved, coverage is adjusted to lower the deductible and family maximum.

The new COVID-19 Income Review application is specific to 2020 income loss (of 10% or more) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes an option for people to estimate income for the rest of the year, and to write a letter of explanation if they are unable to get the financial documents they need.

Over 1.2 million British Columbians have registered for the Fair PharmaCare plan, which is based on income: the less a family earns, the more help they get paying for eligible drugs and medical supplies.

The COVID-19 Income Review application is [available online](#). For a mail-in paper version or for more details about the COVID-19 Income Review, see [Increased Assistance and Payment Options](#).

Learn more about Fair PharmaCare at www.gov.bc.ca/FairPharmaCare

LIMITED COVERAGE DRUGS

The following product has been added as a Limited Coverage benefit under Fair PharmaCare and PharmaCare Plans C and W:

DATE COVERAGE EFFECTIVE	June 30, 2020		
DRUG NAME	sarilumab (KEVZARA®)		
INDICATION	Moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis in adults		
DIN	02460521	STRENGTH AND FORM	150 mg/1.14 mL pre-filled syringe
	02460548		200 mg/1.14 mL pre-filled syringe
	02472961		150 mg/1.14 mL pre-filled pen
	02472988		200 mg/1.14 mL pre-filled pen
PLAN G BENEFIT	No	PLAN P BENEFIT	No