

# BC PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

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

The PharmaCare Newsletter is published by the Pharmaceutical, Laboratory & Blood 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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Did you know?

More than 75,400 British Columbia residents benefited from PharmaCare's Smoking Cessation Program in 2019-2020.

Find more stats like this in [2019-2020 PharmaCare Trends!](#)



## Plan W: Over-the-counter (OTC) medications and supplies

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### Pharmacist-recommended over-the-counter drugs and form

Effective September 8, 2021, the pharmacist-initiated treatment (PIT) list has been retired and pharmacists are now able to recommend and claim drugs under their name from the entire [Plan W Over-The-Counter \(OTC\) Drug formulary](#) (PDF, 766KB), if they complete the new [Plan W OTC Recommendation form \(HLTH 4571\)](#) (PDF, 931KB).

[PharmaCare Policy Section 7.12 – First Nations Health Benefits \(Plan W\)](#) has been revised to remove the PIT list and add the required form for pharmacist-recommended OTCs. Pharmacists must complete the OTC Recommendation form each time before dispensing an eligible OTC product (Schedule II, Schedule III, or unscheduled) and retain a record of the purchase, similar to retaining records for prescription items. Claims entered without a completed OTC Recommendation form are subject to audit and recovery by PharmaCare.

Of note, insulins are **excluded** from this policy, and can be submitted without completion of the OTC Recommendation form. The procedure for non-drug OTCs and medical supplies under Plan W has not changed and does not require the OTC Recommendation form.

Pharmacists should ensure the dispensed OTC is entered into PharmaNet for billing to accurately reflect the patient's medication history.

>> Please see the new [procedure for pharmacists](#).

### Non-drug over-the-counter benefits

[PharmaCare Policy Section 5.9 – Retail Pricing Policy](#) has been clarified for non-drug OTC benefits under Plan W.

Plan W non-drug OTCs are reimbursed up to the maximum retail price set by the First Nations Health Authority, with no dispensing fee.

>> See [Plan W Non-Drug OTC Benefits](#).

## PharmaCare Provider Payment Schedule change due to holiday

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Attention all PharmaCare providers: Due to the implementation of the new federal holiday (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) on September 30, the Provider Payment Schedule's October 4<sup>th</sup> payment has been moved to **October 5<sup>th</sup>**.



>> See the updated [2021 PharmaCare Provider Payment Schedule \(PDF, 160KB\)](#).

## Smoking Cessation Program product changes

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Due to a change in manufacturer, Nicorette® 2 mg and 4 mg lozenges will be assigned new Natural Product Numbers (NPNs) by April 2022 (exact date to be confirmed).

In the meantime, both products will have temporary NPNs. The new 4 mg lozenge is available now and the 2 mg lozenge will be available December 1, 2021.

Effective immediately, the 4 mg lozenge will be covered by PharmaCare under both its current and temporary NPN until April 2022. After April 2022, only 4 mg lozenges with the new NPNs will be fully covered by PharmaCare's Smoking Cessation Program (the temporary NPN will be covered until August 2022 to give pharmacists time to transition their stock).

See the table below for information about current and temporary NPNs for the 4 mg lozenge:

Brand	Product type and strength	Pack size	Current NPN	Temporary NPN (Sep 2021)	New NPN (Apr 2022)
Nicorette®	lozenge 4 mg	80	02247348	80053100	TBD

Note: Nicorette mint flavour only

### Looking ahead

The November issue of the PharmaCare Newsletter will provide more information about the temporary NPN for the Nicorette 2 mg lozenge, available December 1, 2021. PharmaCare expects to also cover its current NPN until April 2022.

In April, coverage for current NPNs of both products will end. It's expected that coverage for temporary NPNs and new NPNs will continue for four months, until August 2022.

## New policy: Long-term care evacuations and PharmaCare Plan B

Several long-term care (LTC) facilities within Interior Health have been temporarily evacuated to other facilities as a result of recent wildfire emergencies, to ensure resident safety and continuity of care.

To provide clarity to community pharmacies, a new PharmaCare policy and related procedures have been developed to ensure residents' drug coverage during LTC facility evacuations due to natural disasters such as floods and fires. Under this new policy, LTC residents evacuated to a Plan B facility will be eligible for and receive Plan B coverage, whether or not their original home facility was enrolled in Plan B.

If the LTC facility that receives the evacuated residents has reason to have a pharmacy other than their ordinary Plan B pharmacy provide services for the evacuated residents they have received, then one may be appointed through appropriate documentation (the Additional Appointed Pharmacy for LTC Evacuation form\*). The receiving facility must complete and sign Section A of the form, and the additional appointed pharmacy must complete and sign section B. Copies of the completed form must then be sent to HIBC and all facilities and pharmacies involved. For example, this form will be required when the receiving facility wishes to have the pharmacy that ordinarily serves the evacuated residents continue to provide services for those residents, if that pharmacy is able.

\*The Additional Appointed Pharmacy for LTC Evacuation form can be requested from HIBC.

>> Specific procedure details are available in [Section 7.3](#) of the PharmaCare Policy Manual, under "[Pharmacy services for people evacuated from Plan B facilities.](#)"

## Prescribed Safer Supply policy summary

On July 15, 2021, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the Ministry of Health released B.C.'s [\*Prescribed Safer Supply\*](#) policy. Prescribed Safer Supply (PSS) is a public health–oriented, harm reduction approach that enables prescribers to help people access pharmaceutical alternatives to illicit drugs, in order to reduce drug poisoning events and deaths.

The policy allows prescribing of a range of medications, including some fentanyl products, and provides PharmaCare coverage for these medications. Eligible clients include people with opioid use disorder or other substance use disorder, or people who use drugs intermittently and are at risk of drug poisoning through illicit supply.

As an emerging approach, PSS will be implemented in phases, beginning with health authority programmatic settings, which provide the safeguards of program structure. Where provincial protocols don't exist, programs will be expected to develop regional prescribing protocols and clinical supports.

The implementation of PSS will be evaluated and monitored for efficacy, to inform policy and service improvements, and to assess unintended impacts. The policy includes a framework for provincial and regional evaluation and monitoring.

## Reminders

### OAT training deadline

September 30, 2021, is the deadline to complete the BC Pharmacy Association (BCPhA) Opioid Agonist Treatment Compliance and Management Program for Pharmacy (OAT-CAMPP). Effective October 1, 2021, PharmaCare will require every pharmacist at a pharmacy enrolled in the opioid agonist treatment (OAT) provider sub-class to have completed the OAT-CAMPP training. OAT-CAMPP training will also be required for pharmacies to enrol in the OAT provider sub-class and maintain enrolment.



Effective September 30, 2021, the College's PPP-66 will also require all pharmacy managers, staff pharmacists, relief pharmacists and pharmacy technicians employed in a community pharmacy that provides pharmacy services related to opioid agonist treatment to complete the OAT-CAMPP training.

For more information and to register for the training, see:

- [College of Pharmacists PPP-66 requirements and OAT resources](#)
- BCPhA's [OAT-CAMPP webpages](#)

### COVID-19 Recordkeeping requirements

As a health and safety precaution during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ministerial Order [M212](#) temporarily waives [subsections 13\(2\)\(a\)\(vii\) and \(b\)\(v\) of the Provider Regulation \("Additional records to be kept by pharmacy providers"\)](#).

This means:



- Original opioid agonist treatment (OAT) prescriptions do not need to be signed by the beneficiary, as long as the order is in effect; and
- Patients do not need to sign an accountability log.

This Ministerial Order ends on the date the Provincial Health Officer declares the COVID-19 public health emergency has passed (unless it is rescinded earlier). While Step 4 of [BC's Restart Plan](#) has been postponed past September, the Step 4 transition may include ending the public health emergency, and pharmacists should be aware that signature requirements in place before the Ministerial Order would be reinstated effective the day the public health emergency ends. An exact date is not known at this time, however pharmacists should be aware that this change will be in effect on the date the emergency ends, not necessarily when announced in the newsletter.

Please note that the College of Pharmacists of BC's signature requirements are still in effect. See the [College's FAQ](#) for more information.

At this time, all other COVID-19-related changes will continue until further notice. Please continue to monitor the PharmaCare Newsletter and College communications.

## Publicly funded vaccines: seasonal influenza

During the 2021–2022 influenza season, the following vaccines will be covered for eligible residents.

Vaccine	PIN
Afluria® Tetra Quadrivalent	66127355
Flulaval® Tetra	66128005
FluMist® Quadrivalent*	66128276
Fluzone® High-Dose (Quadrivalent)	66127356
Fluzone® Quadrivalent	66128073

\*PharmaCare covers a \$12.10 pharmacist administration fee for FluMist.

More information is available at [Vaccine Resources for Pharmacists](#).

## Regular benefits

<b>Drug name</b>	fluticasone propionate (Aermony RespiClick™)		
<b>Date effective</b>	August 12, 2021		
<b>Indication</b>	asthma in patients 12 and older		
<b>DIN</b>	02467895	<b>Strength and form</b>	55 mcg/inhalation powder
	02467909		113 mcg/inhalation powder
	02467917		232 mcg/inhalation powder
<b>Covered under Plans</b>	Fair PharmaCare, B, C, F, P, W		

<b>Drug name</b>	Lipase amylase protease (Creon)		
<b>Date effective</b>	August 19, 2021		
<b>Indication</b>	pancreatic exocrine insufficiency		
<b>DIN</b>	02494639	<b>Strength and form</b>	35,000/35,700/2,240 Ph. Eur. Units, capsules
<b>Covered under Plans</b>	Fair PharmaCare, B, C, D, F, P, W		

<b>Drug name</b>	diclofenac diethylamine (Voltaren Emulgel® products)		
<b>Date effective</b>	September 8, 2021		
<b>Indication</b>	relief of pain associated with recent (acute), localized muscle or joint injuries such as sprains, strains or sports injuries		
<b>DIN</b>	02465035	<b>Strength and form</b>	1.16% w/w gel
	02338580		1.16% w/w gel
	02393190		2.32% w/w gel
	02465043		2.32% w/w gel
<b>Covered under Plan</b>	W		
<b>Notes</b>	Voltaren Emulgel is limited to 120 grams per month per patient		

## Limited coverage benefits

Limited coverage listings are for benefits which require Special Authority approval based on eligible criteria.

Limited coverage for Riximyo® has been extended to cover GPA and MPA:

<b>Drug name</b>	rituximab (Riximyo®)		
<b>Date effective</b>	August 19, 2021		
<b>Indication</b>	Relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, granulomatosis with polyangiitis (GPA) and microscopic polyangiitis (MPA)		
<b>DIN</b>	02498316	<b>Strength and form</b>	10 mg/mL solution for intravenous use (10 mL and 50 mL vial)
<b>Covered under Plans</b>	Fair PharmaCare, C, W		

<b>Drug name</b>	prasugrel, generic		
<b>Date effective</b>	September 2, 2021		
<b>Indication</b>	patients with heart disease who undergo angioplasty		
<b>DIN</b>	02502429	<b>Strength and form</b>	10 mg tablet
<b>Covered under Plans</b>	Fair PharmaCare, C, W		

<b>Drug name</b>	brivaracetam (Brivlera®)		
<b>Date effective</b>	September 3, 2021		
<b>Indication</b>	seizures in patients with epilepsy		
<b>DIN</b>	02452936	<b>Strength and form</b>	10 mg tablet
	02452944		25 mg tablet
	02452952		50 mg tablet
	02452960		75 mg tablet
	02452979		100 mg tablet
<b>Covered under Plans</b>	Fair PharmaCare, B, C, F, W		

## Non-benefits

The following product has been reviewed and won't be listed as a PharmaCare benefit under the DIN below:

Non-benefit decision date: August 3, 2021		
Product	Strength and form	DIN
esketamine hydrochloride (Spravato®)	28 mcg nasal spray	02499290

## Your Voice: Patient input needed for drug decisions

The knowledge and experience of patients, caregivers and patient groups is integral to [B.C.'s drug review process](#).

The Ministry depends on pharmacies and practitioners to help connect patients and their caregivers with opportunities to give input. If you have a patient currently taking one of the drugs under review or who has the condition the new drug treats, please encourage them to visit <http://www.gov.bc.ca/BCyourvoice>.

Currently input is needed for the following:

<b>DRUG</b>	abrocitinib (TBC)
<b>INDICATION</b>	atopic dermatitis (AD)
<b>INPUT WINDOW</b>	August 25 to September 22, 2021

<b>DRUG</b>	upadacitinib (Rinvoq™)
<b>INDICATION</b>	atopic dermatitis (AD)
<b>INPUT WINDOW</b>	August 25 to September 22, 2021

<b>DRUG</b>	romosozumab (Evenity®)
<b>INDICATION</b>	osteoporosis in postmenopausal women
<b>INPUT WINDOW</b>	August 25 to September 22, 2021

<b>DRUG</b>	trientine hydrochloride (MAR-Trientine)
<b>INDICATION</b>	Wilson's disease
<b>INPUT WINDOW</b>	August 25 to September 22, 2021

<b>DRUG</b>	tralokinumab (TBC)
<b>INDICATION</b>	atopic dermatitis (AD) in adults
<b>INPUT WINDOW</b>	August 25 to September 22, 2021

## PharmaCare Scripts

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Did you resolve an interesting pharmacy case, or do you have a question about applying a specific PharmaCare policy? Share your story or inquiry with [PharmaCareInfo@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PharmaCareInfo@gov.bc.ca) and you might see a relevant PharmaCare Script posted!



### Dispensing a non-drug OTC under Plan W

Judy and her 2-year-old daughter Trish enter Taylor's pharmacy looking for an inhaler spacer with mask. Trish is still new to using inhalers for her asthma and attaching a spacer would make it easier for her to use.

Judy: Hi, I need an inhaler spacer with mask.

Taylor: Sure, I can help you find the right spacer. Is it for yourself?

Judy: No, it's for my daughter, Trish. She recently started her inhalers for asthma, but I heard a spacer would be helpful for a child.

Having clarified who the product is for, Taylor can now make the most appropriate recommendation and keep the patient's medical records accurate.

Taylor: I'll just pull up her file. Can I grab Trish's BC Services Card? Do you have an insurance plan that covers spacers?

Judy: Yes, I should have coverage.

Even though inhaler spacers are non-drug OTC products, Taylor checks Trish's profile so he can make an appropriate recommendation. He knows it is good practice to ask whether a patient has medical coverage before taking the item directly to the till; some patients may have PharmaCare or extended medical coverage of OTC products.

Taylor points mother and daughter to a variety of brands and they choose a child-sized spacer with a mask that fits Trish comfortably. Upon billing the inhaler through the pharmacy software, Taylor sees that Trish is registered under PharmaCare Plan W. Taylor finds that the selected inhaler spacer with mask is listed under the [Plan W Non-Drug OTC benefits](#), which means this item is covered by PharmaCare at the [retail price](#) (up to a specified maximum) with no dispensing fee. Taylor enters the appropriate PIN, adjusts the price to exclude the dispensing fee, and submits the correct claim through PharmaNet.

Taylor provides thorough counselling on how to use the inhaler spacer with mask.