



NEWS RELEASE

Pharmacists Pleased with Broader Access to Help Residents Quit Smoking

January 19, 2018 (St. John's, NL): With National Non-Smoking Week just around the corner, the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed news that the Provincial Smoking Cessation Program for Individuals with Low Income has broadened access to assist eligible individuals in quitting smoking. Effective January 15, 2018, the program includes coverage of the Habitrol Patch. This product was originally provided under special authorization only and now adds to the options available for patients, which already included coverage for smoking cessation medications Champix and Zyban.

“As pharmacists, we know that providing various options to help patients quit can increase the likelihood of their success,” said Steve Gillingham, President of PANL. “While quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health, it is also one of the hardest things to accomplish and many patients need several attempts before finally quitting. This added coverage of the patch will likely help many patients in reaching their goal to be smoke-free. There is no better time than right now to talk to your pharmacist or physician on the options best for you.”

The Smoking Cessation Program aims to improve access to quit smoking medications and nicotine replacement products by contributing to the cost of these products for individuals who are eligible under the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program (NLPDP). All beneficiaries aged 18 and over under these NLPDP Drug Plans are eligible for coverage under the Smoking Cessation Program: Access, 65+, Foundation.

Eligible NLPDP clients must obtain a prescription from a pharmacist, physician, or a nurse practitioner for the drugs and the patch. Since 2015, pharmacists have been able to assess and prescribe for a number of conditions, including smoking cessation. In addition to counseling on smoking aids and lifestyle changes, many pharmacists hold clinics on smoking cessation and have the knowledge to help anyone interested in quitting. Studies have shown that a combination of counseling support and use of a smoking cessation aid can often yield very solid results.

Further information can be found here:

http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/wellnesshealthyliving/pdf/Fast_Facts_Smoking_Cess_Prog.pdf

PANL is the voice of pharmacists, with membership including over 750 pharmacists and 190 pharmacy students. PANL advocates for pharmacists as health care team members integral to the effective and efficient delivery of health services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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