

Amendments to Pharmacist Prescribing Regulations

Starting tomorrow, January 31, 2020, amendments to regulations under the Pharmacy Act, 2012 will allow pharmacists to prescribe for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis A and B (including the TWINRIX vaccine), shingles (Herpes Zoster), Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and chickenpox (Varicella Zoster). Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be able to visit their local pharmacy for any of these vaccines without requiring a prescription from a physician.

After a period of active advocacy in this area, PANL is pleased to see these changes and we would like to thank the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board (NLPB) for their ongoing work with the Provincial Government in enabling pharmacists to practice to their full scope.

PANL will work with our Professional Practice Committee and other stakeholders to identify and develop tools to promote best practice in this area. The NLPB has also advised of a Professional Practice webinar about the revised standards taking place on February 11.

The news release is available at:

<https://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2020/health/0130n01.aspx>

We would like to share a couple of QandAs related to the new prescribing regulations:

Question:

Does this mean that pharmacists can only prescribe the TWINRIX vaccine? There will be situations where only Hep A is necessary, etc.

Answer:

No, Hep A, Hep B or both can be prescribed. The amendments were drafted to reflect all three possibilities. TWINRIX was provided as an example in the public communications given that it is likely going to be the most popular. For example, if someone already received the Hep B vaccine as part of school immunization program, they could just get the Hep A vaccine.

Question:

Was there any change to the Standards of Practice that state a pharmacist cannot administer to a child less than five years of age?

Answer:

No, the amendments to the regulations did not change the age.

Question:

If a parent of a school aged child wishes to have their school aged child immunized by a pharmacist, let's say for the HPV vaccine, will the cost be covered by MCP? Or is the publicly funded program for school aged children only available through community health and physicians?

Answer:

If a parent would like to have their school aged child immunized by a pharmacist, they would have to pay out of pocket to the pharmacist; it would not be covered by MCP at

the pharmacy. However, if the child is still eligible to receive the vaccine as part of the school program, they could seek it out via the community health channel free of charge. It is a requirement of the pharmacy standards for a pharmacist to consider a patient's immunization history and the provincial immunization schedules when prescribing for a preventable disease.

As noted by the NLPB, in accordance with these amendments, revisions to the were approved by the Board at their November 2019 meeting. Please review the updated [Standards of Practice - Prescribing by Pharmacists](#) prior to expanding your scope of practice to include the regulation changes.

Key revisions include:

- A new section related to prescribing Schedule I, II or III products for a limited number of preventable diseases
- Changes to the General Standards section, particularly sub-sections related to assessment, documentation and notification/communication, to reflect the availability of the electronic health record
- Changes made to ensure that the standards can be utilized by both community and hospital pharmacists
- Streamlined section related to Adapting a Prescription, to reduce perceived limitations on this category of prescribing