



Public Advisory: Pharmacists Reminding Patients to Call Before Visiting the Pharmacy

March 19, 2020 As the province takes steps to limit the spread of COVID-19, the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) is asking patients to call their pharmacy before visiting, particularly if they have, or are concerned about having, symptoms of the virus.

"While pharmacists remain here to help our patients, we need to keep the safety of our staff and the safety of others visiting the pharmacy top of mind," said Janice Audeau, community pharmacist and PANL President.

Prescription Extensions

PANL is also reminding residents that while pharmacists have had the authority to extend prescriptions for some time, prescriptions cannot be extended in every circumstance. Pharmacists must practice within their current scope of practice which sets parameters around the amount of medication that can be dispensed, if the prescription was previously extended, and an assessment which would include a review of the patient's history with the medication.

"Patients seeking prescription extensions must call ahead and check that the medication can be extended by the pharmacist," added Ms. Audeau. "There are important clinical reasons why pharmacists can't always extend a prescription. Prescriptions that were only meant for one-time use – such as antibiotics and short-term pain medications – and medications that require lab monitoring are not eligible for extension by pharmacists. As well, some medications that are no longer appropriate for patients to take based on new or changing medical conditions would require follow up appointments with a primary physician or nurse practitioner and cannot be restarted without this follow up. It is also important to note that at this time, pharmacists are not able to extend prescriptions for narcotic or controlled drugs."

Residents are also reminded that early refills and/or extensions are not always required and can put additional stress on the drug supply system and contribute to a worsening of drug shortages. There is no need for stockpiling or hoarding of medications.

-30-

Media Contact:

Jennifer Collingwood
Executive Director
Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
jcollingwood@panl.net