

# Addition of Antiretroviral Therapies in PharmaNet

Effective May 4, 2020, the dispensing pharmacies for the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS Drug Treatment Program (BC-CfE) will begin entering antiretroviral (ARV) prescriptions in PharmaNet. The Ministry of Health made this decision with the utmost consideration to patient privacy, and with consideration of views from health care providers and advocacy groups that inclusion of ARVs in PharmaNet would provide greater safety to patients than harm. The PharmaNet system has strict access controls, and the Ministry expects all health care professionals that access the system to honour their professional obligation to patient confidentiality.

## Why is this change happening?

- Per Section 11.4 of the Health Professions Act – Bylaws Schedule F. 11 (4) states that a full pharmacist must review the patient’s personal health information stored on the PharmaNet database before dispensing a drug and take appropriate action if necessary, with respect to any concern regarding the appropriateness of the drug or any drug therapy problem.
- HIV/AIDS patients are living longer and as such may face increasing co-morbidities and associated drug therapies, putting them at risk of significant drug interactions which may diminish therapeutic effectiveness of ARVs or lead to adverse drug events.
- The current COVID-19 pandemic highlights that pharmacists and other health professionals rely heavily on the medication information in PharmaNet to provide safe care; health care providers cannot act on information they do not have. Those with HIV/AIDS should benefit from the same safety advantages that all other patients receive.

## Review PharmaNet before prescribing/dispensing a medication

If a drug therapy problem exists, do not advise patients to interrupt or discontinue their ARV therapy. Please contact the St. Paul’s Ambulatory Pharmacy Outreach Pharmacist between Monday to Friday, 8AM-4PM, at:

- 604 806-8539; or
- From outside Vancouver: 1 855 406-8539
- For urgent issues after-hours and weekends: 1 888 511-6222

Note that historical dispenses will not be available for viewing. ARV recording will start from May 4, 2020 onward.

# Important Reminders

- PharmaNet is subject to strict privacy measures and access controls. Only authorized health care professionals may access PharmaNet to provide safe care to their patients. Any health care professionals that access the system are expected to honour their professional obligation to patient confidentiality. Access to patients' PharmaNet profiles is monitored and should only be reviewed for clinical assessment or when filling a prescription.
- As always, ensure adequate patient counselling space to maintain patient confidentiality.
- Some HIV/AIDS patients may elect to add a PharmaNet protective word to their profile. These patients must inform the BC-CfE of their password in order to prevent any delays in processing their ARV prescription.

## FAQ

### **1. Can I provide an emergency supply of antiretroviral medications to my patients?**

Claims for ARVs submitted by community pharmacies (including emergency supplies) will not be reimbursed by PharmaCare. All ARV prescriptions must continue to be processed through the BC-CfE.

### **2. Will ARVs count towards the five medications required for a medication review?**

ARV medications captured on PharmaNet will now be eligible for medication reviews.

## Resources for Community Pharmacists

There are several recommended resources available to check for drug interactions specific to ARVs:

- <http://www.hiv-druginteractions.org/>
- [app.hivclinic.ca](http://app.hivclinic.ca)
- <http://arv.ucsf.edu/insite>

An HIV Guideline for Community Pharmacists is available on the BC-CfE website:

- <http://www.cfenet.ubc.ca/drug-treatment-program/resources-for-community-pharmacists>

Medication Information Sheets are available here:

- <http://cfenet.ubc.ca/drug-treatment-program/hiv-medication-information-sheets>