

Notice to community pharmacies for expression of interest in COVID-19 oral antiviral drug provision

COVID-19 oral antiviral status

Health Canada is currently reviewing two COVID-19 oral antiviral drugs for entry to the Canadian market, Paxlovid (Pfizer) and molnupiravir (Merck). Deliveries of these treatments to provinces and territories are expected to start following Health Canada authorization of the treatments.

This expression of interest will allow Alberta to better prepare for the receipt of deliveries of these drug products following Health Canada's approval and position Alberta's communities for success.

Should these COVID-19 oral antiviral drugs be approved for use, it is anticipated that initially only a small number of community pharmacies in Alberta will be the primary access point for these. As the supply of these drug products increases over time, more sites will be added with the goal of having every community pharmacy able to dispense these drugs.

It is critical to note that these drug products are to be treated as any other similarly scheduled drug product when undertaking professional activities. While the indication for use of these drugs is pending from Health Canada, it is expected that they will be for the treatment of mild-to-moderate coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in adults with positive test results, and who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death, and for whom alternative COVID-19 treatment options are not accessible or clinically appropriate. These drug products will only be available to Albertans who obtain a valid prescription in accordance with approved indications and eligibility criteria.

Please do not contact Alberta Blue Cross for more information at this time as further details will be made available from Health Canada and Alberta Health should these products be approved.

A small number of pharmacies may be asked to dispense oral antiviral drugs quickly following the pending Health Canada approvals and availability of supply.

Supply

COVID-19 oral antiviral drugs will initially be provided through McKesson Canada to a small number of pharmacies. Initial supplies will be limited; therefore, pharmacies will be chosen to participate in dispensing these drugs based on an expression of interest as well as geographic and population needs.

continued next page

PHARMACY BENEFACT

continued from previous page

Pharmacy eligibility

To be considered for selection to be an access point for COVID-19 oral antiviral treatments in their communities, a pharmacy **must** meet the following criteria:

- Be open seven days a week (or have pharmacist publicly on call on days the pharmacy is closed.)
- Offer two or more no-contact dispensing options such as
 - delivery when required,
 - curbside pick-up or drive thru, and
 - mail-order where appropriately licensed by the Alberta College of Pharmacy.
- Commit to strict inventory management processes to ensure product is always on hand and ready to be dispensed.
- Commit to daily inventory and utilization reporting.

Once supply is available, participating pharmacy names, locations and contact details will be published on the Alberta Health and/or Alberta Blue Cross websites for access by the public.

Expression of interest process

Pharmacies who meet the eligibility criteria are asked to **complete the online expression of interest form by January 13, 2022**, to be considered for participation at the following website www.ab.bluecross.ca/antiviral-medication.php. The link will be active beginning **Friday, January 7, 2022**.

Claims process

Pharmacies will submit claims for dispensing and eligible pharmacy services as per the rates and rules established for all other oral drug products.

Selected participating pharmacies will be notified by Alberta Blue Cross as soon as January 17, 2022, for confirmation and will be provided more information as it becomes available.

Please do not contact Alberta Blue Cross for more information at this time as further details are not available from Health Canada and Alberta Health until these products are approved.

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area)

403-294-4041 (Calgary and area)

1-800-361-9632 (toll free)

FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area)

FAX 1-877-305-9911 (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

Visit ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php

