
April 9, 2020

Guidance to Pharmacy Professionals: Emergency Planning and Central Fill Pharmacy Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, pharmacies must have plans in place to ensure continuity of care for their patients in the event of unforeseen pharmacy staff shortages or temporary closure.

There are various measures that pharmacies may put into place as part of their planning, which can include:

1. [reduction of pharmacy hours](#)
2. [increased utilization of delivery services](#)
3. [limiting in-person contact with patients and their agents](#)
4. employing additional staff, such as interns/recent graduates, and
5. utilization of centralized prescription filling services

A pharmacy can participate in central fill by either:

- a. Providing central fill services to other pharmacies, or
- b. Having prescriptions filled by a central fill pharmacy

Pharmacies that are looking to centralize part of the prescription filling process during the COVID-19 pandemic are reminded to review the [Central Fill Practice Direction](#) on the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba's website. The practice direction outlines the responsibilities of the patient contact pharmacy and the central fill pharmacy.

Compliance with the Central Fill Practice Direction is required from all pharmacies in Manitoba that provide centralized prescription processing services to another pharmacy or obtain centralized prescription processing services from another pharmacy.

Providing central fill services to other pharmacies:

Pharmacies wishing to provide central fill services to other pharmacies in Manitoba must have approval from the College for this added component to their community pharmacy license.

Patient-contact pharmacy seeking central fill pharmacy services:

If part of the pharmacy's pandemic planning includes partnering with a central fill pharmacy to provide centralized prescription filling, the patient-contact pharmacy must ensure that there is a clear agreement in place, and patients are informed. It is important to review the responsibilities of the patient contact pharmacy described in the above linked practice direction.



There may be cases where a pharmacy is unable to continue to operate due to illness, self-isolation or other circumstances and must close temporarily. In these cases, the primary consideration must be the continuity of care for the patients. Patients must be able to access their records and information in the event of a closure. If the pharmacy must close temporarily, please remember to review the Permanent and [Temporary Pharmacy Closure Practice Direction](#), complete the [Temporary Closure checklist](#) and submit the information to the College.