



College of Pharmacists of Manitoba

200 Tache Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2H 1A7

Phone (204) 233-1411 | Fax: (204) 237-3468

E-mail: info@cphm.ca | Website: www.cphm.ca

Point of Care Testing for COVID-19 by Pharmacists

There are several Point of Care Testing (POCT) for COVID-19 that are currently being endorsed by the media and other countries around the world, including antigen-detecting and antibody-detecting (immunodiagnostic) tests for the purposes of diagnosis and surveillance. The College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (the College) has received several questions from practicing pharmacists about their ability to administer and interpret the results of such tests.

According to guidance provided by Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living (MHSAL), all COVID-19 testing is currently being coordinated provincially. This ensures that all results are integrated with the health system, tracked and reported daily, and that positive test results immediately trigger Public Health interventions including expedited contact tracing. Further, there are no Health Canada approved POCT that have been validated for sensitivity and accuracy in Manitoba at this time.

In addition, POCT in community pharmacies presents several staff and patient safety concerns. Very few pharmacies in the province are equipped with the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and fewer have the infrastructure to properly isolate suspected cases to protect staff and other pharmacy patrons alike.

Lastly, the College reminds all registrants that according to section 2(2) of the *Pharmaceutical Act*, pharmacists in Manitoba can only interpret, but not administer, patient **self-administered** automated tests. **POCT for COVID-19 does not fit that criteria**, as they are screening/diagnostic procedures and must be administered and interpreted by a trained healthcare provider. All pharmacists are encouraged to review the [Test Interpretation](#) Practice Direction for additional information.

College of Pharmacists of Manitoba Mission:

To protect the health and well-being of the public by ensuring and promoting safe, patient-centred, and progressive pharmacy practice in collaboration with other health-care providers.

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