



AP04: Process to Review Pharmacy Requests for Reduced Hours of Operation

Policy Type: Administration of the Act		Policy No: AP04	
Effective Date: September 27, 2024	Last Approval/Revision Date:	Policy Review Frequency: Yearly	

Purpose:

To establish a policy and criteria for the Registrar/CEO to review and approve pharmacy requests to operate less than the required minimum number of hours set in the Regulation and Practice Directions.

Definitions:

Hours of operation for a community pharmacy are the hours when the pharmacy is open to the public and provides pharmacy services.

Hours of operation for a hospital pharmacy are the hours when the pharmacy is providing pharmacy services.

Temporary means lasting for only a limited period of time and anticipated to last no longer than one (1) year.

Background:

The Pharmaceutical Regulation (Regulation) and Pharmacy Facilities Practice Direction require a pharmacy maintains hours of operation that:

- meet the needs of the community, hospital or persons served by the pharmacy, and
- are no less than 25 hours over a minimum of four days per week, unless council reviews and approves the lesser number of hours.

Criteria:

The Registrar/CEO may exercise discretion in approving a request for a pharmacy’s hours of operation to be reduced to less than 25 hours over 4 days a week if the following criteria are met:

1. The request is due to a *temporary* operational or staffing issue outside of the pharmacy owner and manager’s direct control.* Permanent exemptions will not be granted.
2. The pharmacy manager has taken all possible actions to operate within the standard minimum hour requirements.
3. The proposed hours of operation will continue to meet the needs of the community, hospital, or persons served by the pharmacy.
4. The proposed operation hours will maintain the pharmacy’s safe operation and continuity of patient care.

5. The pharmacy is the only pharmacy in the community or, a disruption in service by the pharmacy making the request will be detrimental to either the community or hospital served by the pharmacy.
6. The pharmacy does not have a distance care component on its licence.
7. The request is received and approved by the Registrar/CEO a minimum of seven (7) days prior to notifying the public of the proposed change in hours.

* The duration of the exemption will be determined by the Registrar/CEO based on a consideration of patient safety, regional and operating realities, and the timeframe requested by the pharmacy manager.

Process:

1. The pharmacy manager makes a formal written request to the Registrar/CEO in which includes the following:
 - a. The name, address and contact information of the pharmacy involved in the request.
 - b. The pharmacy's proposed hours of operation and the duration of the request.
 - c. Rationale for the request which clearly identifies how the above criteria have been met.
 - d. A contingency plan in case the need for the reduced hours persists past the approved exemption period.
2. The request is considered by the Registrar/CEO or designate, with the decision being communicated to the pharmacy manager in writing.

Conditions:

1. If the exemption request is approved by the Registrar/CEO:
 - a. The pharmacy manager must review and adhere to CPhM's "Changing the Hours of Operation of a Pharmacy" guidance document.
 - b. The pharmacy's hours cannot be further reduced during the timeframe of the exemption unless a written request is received and approved by the Registrar/CEO.
 - c. Once the exemption has expired the pharmacy must maintain minimum operating hours of at least 25 hours over 4 days per week unless an additional request is received and approved by the Registrar/CEO.
 - d. The Registrar/CEO reserves the right to revoke their approval at any time if the pharmacy's operations do not meet the criteria and conditions of this policy. When approval is revoked seven days advanced written notice will be provided to the pharmacy manager, unless the Registrar/CEO determines advanced notice is not in the best interest of public safety.