

## **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR COVID-19 ORAL ANTIVIRAL DRUG PROVISION UPDATED May 3, 2022**

Please note that Manitoba Health has extended the closing date for initial Expression of Interest to **end of day Wednesday, May 4, 2022**. Pharmacies that have already submitted an Expression of Interest Form do not need to submit a new EOI Form.

### **COVID-19 Oral Antiviral Drug Status**

Health Canada has authorized the combination of two antiviral drugs, nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (brand name Paxlovid), to treat adults with mild to moderate COVID-19 who are at high risk of progressing to serious disease, including hospitalization or death. This is the first authorized COVID-19 treatment that can be taken orally at home. The federal government announced on December 3, 2021, that it had signed agreements with the manufacturers of Paxlovid and molnupiravir (another oral COVID-19 treatment, still under review) to provide a supply to Canada pending Health Canada authorization.

Paxlovid has been available in Manitoba since late January 2022 via a central referral process coordinated by each of the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs), and dispensation to clients through specific Service Delivery Organizations (SDOs) within each RHA. To expand access, the central referral process will end, and dispensation of COVID-19 oral antiviral drugs will shift from SDOs to designated community pharmacies in Manitoba.

An expression of interest is being conducted to identify pharmacies that meet the eligibility criteria outlined below and that are interested in participating immediately upon notification of approval. Depending on response and supply, it may not be possible for all pharmacies that express interest to be selected initially. **Over time, it is anticipated that more sites may be added.**

Timely drug provision is critical, as these drugs must be initiated within a certain number of days of the onset of patient symptoms. Manitoba Health continues to work with Shared Health and other partners in the health system to expand access to COVID-19 treatment options as they become available. Shared Health publishes information regarding current treatment options for COVID-19, including guidelines and educational materials to assist with prescribing and dispensing of these drugs, here: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/mab/>

**Prescribers and pharmacies will be notified of the coordinated date when the central referral process will end and non-centralized clinical assessments and community pharmacy dispensation will begin. Updated guidance and reference materials will be published online here: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/mab/>.**

These drugs will be distributed to selected pharmacies through the Materials Distribution Agency (MDA). An initial supply will be provided, with replenishment stock to be ordered from MDA via a Paxlovid Order Form. The product will be provided at no cost to pharmacies. Each selected pharmacy will be notified of the maximum number of treatment courses they may keep on hand (the quantity may vary between selected pharmacies to address geographic and population needs), and must maintain proper security of this inventory. Manitoba Health will retain ownership of these drugs.

Dispensation of these drugs will be recorded in the Drug Programs Information Network (DPIN) according to a Claims Submission Procedure specific to COVID-19 oral antiviral drugs.

**Pharmacies will be selected based on this expression of interest as well as geographic and population needs.**

### **Pharmacy Eligibility**

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

- Be open 7 days a week or have a pharmacist publicly on-call on days the pharmacy is closed;
- Be willing to offer “no-contact” dispensing options including delivery and/or curbside pick-up or drive-thru at no additional cost to the client;
- Take any training that may be required;
- Commit to required inventory management processes to ensure that allocated product is on hand and ready to be dispensed; and
- Commit to inventory and utilization reporting as requested (which could include daily reporting).

**Expressions of Interest where a pharmacy indicates service availability less than 7 days a week will be considered. However, if another pharmacy in the area offers service availability 7 days a week, that pharmacy will be prioritized for selection to maximize service provision.**

Participating pharmacy names, locations, and contact details may be published on the [gov.mb.ca](http://gov.mb.ca) and/or [sharedhealthmb.ca](http://sharedhealthmb.ca) websites for access by the public.

### **Pharmacy Remuneration**

Pharmacies will be remunerated a professional fee of \$15, or the pharmacy’s Usual and Customary Fee established via the existing Pharmacy Agreement between the pharmacy and the Government of Manitoba, whichever is lower, per treatment course dispensed.

These drugs must be provided at no cost to the client. The professional fee includes any associated delivery fees. For added clarity, pharmacies may not charge any additional fees for this product or associated services.

### **Expression of Interest Process**

Pharmacies that meet the eligibility criteria are asked to **complete the expression of interest form available here: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/pharmacare/healthprofessionals.html> and submit it by end of day **Wednesday, May 4, 2022**** to the following email address: [PDPIInfoAudit@gov.mb.ca](mailto:PDPIInfoAudit@gov.mb.ca). Please note that the form requires signature by the Pharmacy Owner or Pharmacy Manager with signing authority.

**Although the initial expression of interest will close on this date, pharmacies are encouraged to submit the expression of interest form at any time after this date for consideration, as additional sites may be added to address geographic and population needs.**

Questions may be submitted by e-mail here: [PDPIInfoAudit@gov.mb.ca](mailto:PDPIInfoAudit@gov.mb.ca).

**Selected participating pharmacies will be notified by Manitoba Health as soon as possible, and will be provided more information, including ordering process and claim submission procedure, as it becomes available. Thank you for your consideration.**