

April 23, 2020

To: Physicians, Nursing & Pharmacy
From: Pharmacy Managers

Drug shortages are one of many concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. These concerns have been expressed in news reports, on medical websites and social media. Supply risk for a given medication can vary between countries, provinces and even Health Authorities.

Island Health's Pharmacy department is engaged in the following actions to maintain supplies, so that teams can continue providing quality care:

- Engagement in provincial and federal conversations on managing drug shortages;
- Identification and tracking of particular medications important for COVID-19 management;
- Sourcing increased quantities of medication, and/or sourcing from alternate suppliers when possible; and
- Use of forecasting models to project medication demand for different COVID-19 management scenarios (these models are based on the provincial experience in managing patients admitted to critical care with COVID-19).

What can you expect when a medication is in short supply?

- Pharmacy will engage with appropriate stakeholders to develop mitigation strategies (for further information on this, see [Drug Shortage Mitigation Strategies During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)).
- Pharmacy will coordinate communication of these strategies to appropriate stakeholders (i.e. memos, PowerChart notifications and/or posting to the Pharmacy INTRANet and Medical Staff webpage).

What can you do now to help conserve medication?

- Do not open medication packages or draw up parenteral medications prior to a decision to administer the medication.
- Prepare medications outside of patient's room if possible.
- Do not store or transfer medication supplies into a patient's environment unless required.
- Review this memo ([COVID-19 and Reduction of Medication Waste](#)) for further information on general medication conservation strategies.

Additional information can be found on the Pharmacy INTRANet [COVID-19](#) and [Drug Shortages](#) pages.

**Please share this information with relevant stakeholders.
Contact your local Pharmacy Department with any questions.**