

Updated July 2, 2020 (in red)

Third-Party Payors – COVID-19 Exceptions				
Plan	Days' Supply Policy	Early Refill Policy	Audits	Prior Approval
TELUS Health/Assure <sup>1</sup>	Not mandated, days' supply at the discretion of the pharmacist	COVID-19 <b>negative</b> patients: standard early refill policy remains  COVID-19 <b>positive</b> patients: pharmacist may override an early refill with a code provided by the TELUS Health Help Desk	Standard audit policy in place	Standard policies in place. Drugs that require prior approval are determined by the carrier
Express Scripts <sup>2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9</sup>	Standard days' supply policy in place  <b>Empire Life:</b> Effective July 6, 2020, the temporary 30-day supply limit on specialty drugs has been removed and day supply limits will return to being adjudicated relative to benefit plan design.  <b>Johnson Insurance:</b> Dispensing fee coverage is based on the individual's plan.	Standard refill policy in place.  Pharmacists must use professional judgement and may use codes such as <b>UI</b> or <b>UJ</b> to override early refill message, if early refills are made for a medically valid reason.  Pharmacists should document decision.	Temporary suspension of on-site pharmacy audits and compliance desk audits.  Continuation of next day claims verification activities and Fraud, Waste and Abuse Investigations.	Standard policies in place.
Green Shield <sup>10,11,12</sup>	90-days' supply requirement for maintenance medications has been temporarily suspended, days' supply at the discretion of the pharmacist.	Early refills may be permitted based on the professional judgment of the pharmacist.	Audits remain active for actions that require override	Standard policies in place for new requests for prior approval drugs.  Prior approval drugs with expiries on or before June 30, 2020 are extended by 4 months from the original expiry

	<p>No override or documentation necessary unless an override code is used.</p> <p>Days' supply does not affect dispensing fee eligibility.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Effective July 1, 2020, will revert back to standard days' supply policy</p>	<p>If an intervention code is used, it must be accompanied with appropriate documentation.</p>		<p>date or to July 31, 2020, whichever is longer. For current prior approvals that are expiring after June 30, 2020, extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p><b>Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)</b><sup>13,14,15,16</sup></p>	<p>100-days' supply policy is reinstated</p> <p>30-day maximum dispense policy for opioids, benzodiazepines, gabapentin, pregabalin, stimulants and nabilone can be overridden when required for the purposes of client access and based on pharmacist's professional judgement; may require a call to the Drug Exception Centre (DEC) at 1-800-580-0950.</p> <p>Documentation for the reason for the intervention (e.g., COVID-19 preparedness) must be on the prescription or on the patient's file.</p>	<p>Early refills (i.e., before 2/3 of medication used up) will receive rejection code <b>ME, MW, MY, or NE</b>.</p> <p>Pharmacists should use professional judgement to determine if an early refill is required and use an appropriate CPhA intervention code to override the rejection.</p> <p>Documentation for the reason for the intervention (e.g., COVID-19 preparedness) must be on the prescription or on the patient's file</p>	<p>Standard audit policies in place</p>	<p>Some DINs that were limited use benefits are now open benefits and do not require prior approval. Pharmacists should electronically submit these claims as open benefits and if a rejection is received then the NIHB Drug Exception Centre (DEC) should be contacted at 1-800-580-0950 to request for prior approval. Emergency supplies can be provided for up to 14 days while waiting approval from the DEC.</p> <p><b>Renewals of prior approvals for certain limited use medications (i.e., biologics, oral chemotherapy, OFEB, and Ebriet):</b> Existing approvals due to expire between <b>April and September 2020</b> have been extended. Pharmacists should remove the prior approval number on these claims and try to bill directly. If a rejection is received, the NIHB Drug Exception Centre (DEC) should be contacted at 1-800-580-0950.</p>
<p><b>Veteran's Affairs/Medavie/Ontario Blue Cross</b><sup>17,18,19</sup></p>	<p>Standard days' supply policy in place and any potential changes are under review. Pharmacists should use clinical and</p>	<p>Standard early refill policy in place.</p>	<p>Suspended all onsite audits for all programs including federal and IRCC.</p>	<p><b>Renewals ONLY:</b> Prior authorizations that expired between <b>March 1, 2020 to May 31, 2020</b>, had been extended by 90 days</p>

	<p>professional judgement to ensure patient's medication needs are met.</p>		<p>Desk audits and investigations remain active except for Federal Health Claims Processing Service (FHPCS).</p>	<p>from current renewal date or until July 31, 2020, whichever comes first – some drugs are excluded from this extension (e.g., drugs for Hepatitis C). Standard policies in place for renewals of prior authorizations that expired after <b>May 31, 2020</b>.</p>
<p><b>NexgenRx</b><sup>20,21</sup></p>	<p>Not mandated. Dispensing quantity is at the discretion of the pharmacist. If a pharmacist chooses to dispense a 30-days' supply, the dispensing fee is covered. These policies continue to be under review.</p> <p>Pharmacists can call the HelpDesk if they require an override code for a claim.</p>	<p>Standard refill policy in place.</p> <p>Pharmacists can call the HelpDesk if they require an override code for a claim.</p>	<p>Audits and investigations still in place for rejected claims that are not reconciled with an override code. However, pharmacists have 30 days instead of the usual 14 days to submit audit responses.</p>	<p>Standard policies and lists regarding drugs requiring prior authorization remain in place.</p> <p>For expiring prior authorizations, pharmacists or patients can contact <a href="mailto:providerservices@nexgenrx.com">providerservices@nexgenrx.com</a> to ensure patients continue to have access to their medications.</p>
<p><b>Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program</b> <small>22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30</small></p>	<p>As of June 15, 2020, the Ministry's 30-days' supply limit recommendation ended, and pharmacists can fill prescriptions as they did prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., up to a 100-days' supply if the prescription allows). ODB recipient co-payments also returned to their previous amounts.</p> <p>At the end of day June 21, 2020, PINs used for co-payment reimbursement claims for reduced quantities dispensed prior to June 15, 2020 following the ministry's supply limit recommendation were discontinued.</p>	<p>Standard early refill policy remains in place.</p> <p>Pharmacist should use professional judgement and document reason for early refill if filling more than 10 days in advance of finishing current supply.</p>	<p>Inspection activities suspended until further notice.</p>	<p><b>EAP Approvals</b> Automatic extension of all EAP approvals that have expired by an additional 90 days from the expiry date listed on the original approval letter.</p> <p><b>Limited Use Authorizations</b> Pharmacists who are unable to obtain a renewal of an LU authorization may extend the LU authorization period, as deemed appropriate based on documented professional judgment, and the ministry will continue to cover the cost, as an interim measure. Pharmacists must document on the prescription dispensing record the appropriate reason for use (RFU) code; date and duration of LU authorization period extension; rationale for the extension; and the pharmacist's name</p>

	<p>Please note that chronic medications dispensed in installments due to the Ministry's 30-days' supply limit recommendation prior to June 15, 2020 do not count towards the five dispensing fees per 365-days rule. If the response code "87 – Exceeds maximum # of professional fees for this drug" is received due to reaching the limit early as a result of these frequent dispensing events, pharmacists can override it with the intervention code <b>UN</b> and document the reason for use.</p> <p>For more information, please refer to the Ministry's <a href="#">EO Notice</a> and <a href="#">FAQs</a>.</p>			<p>and OCP number. More information on additional conditions that must be met can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p><b>Nutrition Product Forms</b> Pharmacists who are unable to reach the prescriber to complete a new nutrition product form during the pandemic can extend the authorization period of expired forms by another <b>6 months</b>. The reason for the extension must be documented on the original form. More information can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>Canadian Benefit Providers</b><sup>31,32</sup></p>	<p>Standard days' supply policy in place.</p>	<p>Early refill policy changes vary case-by-case and by carrier; contact the Canadian Benefit Providers HelpDesk for more information</p>	<p>Standard audit policy in place.</p>	<p>Standard policies remain in place.</p>
<p><b>ClaimSecure</b><sup>33,34,35</sup></p>	<p>Pharmacists may bypass the normal 90-days policy to dispense 30 days with code <b>MG</b> based on the pharmacist's professional judgement.</p> <p>Dispensing fees will be paid for each dispensing of 30 days.</p>	<p>Standard refill policy in place.</p>	<p>Standard audit policy in place.</p>	<p>Standard policies remain in place.</p>

## References:

1. Called TELUS Health, advised by Wendy. June 18, 2020 at 10:15 am
2. Called Express Scripts Canada. Advised by Adanna. June 23, 2020 at 3:48 pm.
3. Email correspondence with Adanna from Express Scripts Canada. June 23, 2020 at 3:49 pm.
4. Called Johnson Insurance, advised by Brooke. April 7, 2020 at 1:35pm.
5. Called Express Scripts, advised by Dana. June 19, 2020 at 2:47pm.
6. Communication received from Express Scripts Canada Re: Empire Life Update: Specialty drugs 30-day supply policy. Received April 15, 2020.
7. Communication received from Express Scripts Canada. Reminder: Early refill and emergency supply policy. March 20, 2020. Received June 23, 2020.
8. Communication received from Express Scripts Canada. Pharmacy audits and verification activities – Express Scripts Canada. April 20, 2020. Received June 23, 2020.
9. Communication received from Express Scripts Canada. Update: Specialty drugs 30-day supply policy. Received June 30, 2020.
10. Called Green Shield Canada. Advised by Christopher. June 18, 2020 at 3:15pm.
11. Email correspondence with Christopher from Green Shield. June 19, 2020 at 3:29pm.
12. Called Green Shield Canada. Advised by Natasha. June 26, 2020 at 4:31pm.
13. Indigenous Services Canada. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS) for Pharmacy Providers: COVID-19 Preparedness and Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Coverage. Accessed April 6, 2020. <https://provider.express-scripts.ca/documents/Pharmacy/Bulletins/NIHB%20Rx%20FAQ%20-%20COVID-19%20Preparedness.pdf>
14. Called NIHB, advised by Carmen. June 18, 2020 at 2:20pm.
15. Indigenous Services Canada. Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program: Changes in Other Coverage and Extension of Approvals. Accessed April 14, 2020. <https://provider.express-scripts.ca/documents/Pharmacy/Bulletins/NIHB%20Changes%20in%20Coverage%20and%20Extension%20of%20Approvals.pdf>
16. Indigenous Services Canada. Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program: New Listing and Dispensing Update. Accessed May 29, 2020. <https://provider.express-scripts.ca/documents/Pharmacy/Bulletins//NIHB%20New%20Listing%20and%20Dispensing%20Update.pdf>
17. Medavie Blue Cross. Important information about COVID-19. <https://www.medaviebc.ca/en/covid19>. Accessed April 3, 2020.
18. Called Medavie Pharmacy Support, advised by Aaron. June 18, 2020 at 2:11pm.
19. Email correspondence with Aaron from Medavie. June 22, 2020 at 8:52am.
20. Called NexgenRx, advised by Tina. June 19, 2020 at 10:21am.
21. Email correspondence with Tina from NexgenRx. June 19, 2020 at 12:32pm.
22. Ontario Ministry of Health. Notice: Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program Changes and Guidance for Dispensers during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp\\_eo/notices/exec\\_office\\_20200320.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp_eo/notices/exec_office_20200320.pdf). Accessed March 30, 2020
23. Ontario Pharmacists Association. COVID-19 Pandemic – A Pharmacist’s Guide to Pandemic Preparedness. [https://www.opatoday.com/Media/Default/Default/OPA\\_GUIDE\\_FOR\\_PANDEMIC\\_PREPAREDNESS.pdf](https://www.opatoday.com/Media/Default/Default/OPA_GUIDE_FOR_PANDEMIC_PREPAREDNESS.pdf). Accessed April 6, 2020.
24. Ontario Ministry of Health. Notice: Ontario Drug Benefit Program and Exceptional Access Program Changes during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp\\_eo/notices/exec\\_office\\_20200415.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp_eo/notices/exec_office_20200415.pdf). Accessed April 19, 2020.

25. Ontario Ministry of Health. Executive Officer Notice: Regulatory Amendments to Ontario Drug Benefit Program Co-payments. [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp\\_eo/notices/exec\\_office\\_0520201205.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp_eo/notices/exec_office_0520201205.pdf). Accessed May 16, 2020.
26. Ontario Ministry of Health. FAQs for Dispensers on the Regulatory Amendments to Ontario Drug Benefit Program Co-payments during the COVID-19 Pandemic. [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp\\_eo/notices/fq\\_exec\\_office\\_0520201205.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp_eo/notices/fq_exec_office_0520201205.pdf). Accessed May 16, 2020.
27. Ontario Ministry of Health. Executive Officer Notice: Removal of the 30-days' Supply Dispensing Limit Recommendation. [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp\\_eo/notices/exec\\_office\\_20200612.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp_eo/notices/exec_office_20200612.pdf). Accessed June 19, 2020.
28. Ontario Ministry of Health. Frequently Asked Questions: Removal of the 30-days' Supply Dispensing Limit Recommendation. [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp\\_eo/notices/fq\\_exec\\_office\\_20200612.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp_eo/notices/fq_exec_office_20200612.pdf). Accessed June 26, 2020.
29. Call with Jagdeep from Ontario Ministry of Health. June 22, 2020 at 1:30pm.
30. Call with Guylaine from ODB Help Desk. June 19, 2020 at 11:36 am.
31. Called Canadian Benefit Providers, advised by Betty. June 19, 2020 at 9:34am.
32. Canadian Benefit Provider HelpDesk. Response April 3, 2020 at 5:17pm.
33. Called ClaimSecure, advised by Susan. June 18, 2020 at 3:54pm.
34. Email correspondence with Susan from ClaimSecure. April 6, 2020.
35. Called ClaimSecure, advised by Susan. June 22, 2020 at 3:39pm.

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