

**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.**