



Date: April 24, 2020 \*\*\*UPDATE\*\*\*  
Memo To: Physicians, Nursing and Pharmacy  
From: Pharmacy Managers  
**RE: COVID-19 and Reduction of Medication Waste**

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### **Situation:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Island Health will likely experience medication shortages. There is disruption in the global supply chain for a wide variety of medications, including those used to treat COVID-19. This issue is being addressed at both federal and provincial levels. Pharmacy is actively monitoring this rapidly evolving situation at Island Health.

**As a reminder, and to mitigate risk within Island Health, supplies of all medications should be conserved whenever possible.**

### **Recommended Actions For Clinicians:**

- Return all intact and unused medications to Pharmacy (or to the return bin in Dispensing Cabinets). Discard medications that have been contaminated.
- Do not open medication packages or draw up parenteral medications prior to a decision to administer the medication.
- Prepare medications outside of a patient's room if possible.
- Do not store or transfer medication supplies into a patient's environment unless required.
- Do not modify unit dose packaging by writing on it. The medication must be discarded if this occurs.
- Take measures to protect medication supplies stored in rooms where there is a potential for airborne generating medical procedures (AGMP) on suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients.
  - Options include moving these medication supplies outside of these environments or ensuring medication storage cabinets remain closed until decontamination of the cabinet has been completed.

### **Resources:**

- [Island Health COVID-19 web page](#)
- [Pharmacy Drug Shortages web page](#)
- [Medication Related Guidance and Recommendations](#)

**Memo content reviewed by Island Health Infection Control.  
Please contact your site pharmacy if you have any questions or concerns.**