



COLLEGE OF  
PHARMACISTS  
OF MANITOBA



College of  
Registered Nurses  
of Manitoba

## Prescribing and Dispensing of Drugs to Treat COVID-19

### Oral Dexamethasone

#### Increased urgency to affirm appropriateness of use

Recently, the results of a clinical trial involving dexamethasone for the treatment of COVID-19 in severely ill patients have been announced in the media. Researchers have announced that preliminary evidence suggests that dexamethasone improves survival rates in severely ill hospitalized patients.

While this clinical trial was limited to severely ill COVID-19 patients, the announcement of these results has garnered significant attention in the media. As a result, prescribers and pharmacists may encounter patients in the community seeking dexamethasone for personal use, as many healthcare professionals encountered with hydroxychloroquine.

Please note that oral dexamethasone is listed on the [Health Canada Tier 3 Drug Shortage List](#), and is in short supply in Canada. As defined by Health Canada, Tier 3 shortage are those that have the greatest potential impact on Canada's drug supply and health care system. Impact is based on low availability of alternative supplies, ingredients or therapies.

Manitobans have an expectation that their health team members, including physicians, nurse practitioners and pharmacists, continue to work together to ensure that prescribing and dispensing of medications for the treatment of this deadly virus is evidence-based and in the best interest of patient and public safety.

CPhM would like to remind pharmacists of their responsibilities to their patients and the public, as outlined in Section III and VII of the [Code of Ethics](#). Additionally, pharmacists are encouraged to review Section 83 of the Pharmaceutical Regulations, which outline a pharmacist's responsibility to ensure the appropriateness of treatment and to ensure that a drug has been prescribed in accordance with the standards of care and patient safety.

CPSM reminds prescribing members of section 6 in the Code of Ethics and Professionalism and the provisions defining good medical care in the CPSM Standard of Practice Regulation section 3.

Collectively, CPSM, CRNM, and CPhM recognize and appreciate your extraordinary efforts during these unprecedented and challenging times. Your diligence will support appropriate use, improved health, and the continued availability of these drugs for those who need them most.