

Notice from the Executive Officer: Changes in the Way Social Assistance Clients Access Drug Coverage

August 31, 2016

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) are enabling social assistance clients to use their Ontario health card to access the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program to get their prescription medicine, rather than issuing them a monthly paper drug card for this purpose.

This change will apply only to social assistance clients who are recipients of:

- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), including the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD); and
- Ontario Works (OW), including Temporary Care Assistance (TCA)

Starting September 2016 until December 2016

- Social assistance clients will continue to receive their monthly paper drug card during this period and may continue to use the paper drug card to fill their prescription medications at their community pharmacy. Alternatively, these clients may begin to use their Ontario health card for this purpose.

As of December 2016

- Most social assistance clients will no longer receive a monthly paper drug eligibility card each month and will be required to present their Ontario health card when filling prescriptions under the ODB program, consistent with requirements for other ODB program recipients.
- Clients who are not eligible for an Ontario health card will continue to receive a paper drug card to access the ODB program.

Impact to Pharmacy

Retaining paper drug cards on file

- Pharmacies will no longer need to keep paper drug eligibility cards on file for social assistance clients who use their health cards to access prescription drugs.

- Pharmacies that continue to use paper drug cards to verify eligibility must retain paper drug cards on file for two years past the last claim date, for claim validation purposes. Discarding paper drug cards prior to the two year period may result in claim recoveries.

Verifying eligibility where coverage cannot be validated by the Health Network System

- Pharmacies will be able to verify social assistance eligibility by calling a provincially managed call centre toll-free at **1-888-284-3928**.

The Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) has been working very closely with MCSS and MOHLTC to develop a user guide and other materials in support of this change. These materials can be accessed through the EO Communications webpage at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp_eo/eo_communiq.aspx

Thank you for your support and contribution to improving service delivery to social assistance clients.

Who can I contact if I have additional program related questions for the paperless drug card?

Please contact the Ministry of Community and Social Services e-mail account at SASM-Q&A@ontario.ca

For all ODB related questions, please call the ODB Pharmacy Help Desk at: 1-800-668-6641