

Notice from the Executive Officer: Addition of Nurse Practitioners to the Palliative Care Facilitated Access (PCFA) Mechanism

February 8, 2018

Effective February 9, 2018, the Palliative Care Facilitated Access (PCFA) Drug Products mechanism will be expanded to include certain nurse practitioners who are authorized to prescribe controlled drugs and substances.

Under Part VI-B of the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Formulary, certain drug products used to treat ODB-eligible patients receiving palliative care are reimbursed through the PCFA mechanism. This includes high-strength long-acting opioid drug products (morphine 200 mg tablets and capsules, hydromorphone 24 mg and 30 mg capsules, fentanyl 75 mcg/hour and 100 mcg/hour transdermal patches) for patients requiring palliative care. Currently under this mechanism, a select group of participating physicians is exempt from the usual requirement of obtaining approval for these drug products under the Exceptional Access Program (EAP) on a case-by-case basis. Effective February 9, 2018, the list of eligible prescribers will be expanded to include nurse practitioners who meet specific criteria (see below).

The PCFA nurse practitioner prescribers list, prescriber eligibility criteria and registration are maintained by the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario (NPAO) and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO). The prescriber list will be shared with the ministry, pharmacies, the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO), the Ontario Medical Association (OMA), the Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP) and the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA). This list will be updated on an ongoing basis.

All nurse practitioners in Ontario are eligible to register for the Palliative Care Facilitated Access (PCFA) prescriber list if they meet the following criteria.

A nurse practitioner who wishes to be added to the PCFA prescriber list must:

- Hold a current certification in the extended class [RN(EC)] with the College of Nurses of Ontario; and
- Be authorized to prescribe controlled drugs and substances; and
- Have no restrictions on the nurse practitioner certification that impact their ability to practice; and
- Provide evidence of continuing education in palliative and end of life care.

In addition, the nurse practitioner must:

- Provide 20 or more palliative care consults in a year; or
- Provide 30–50 or more palliative care visits in a year; or
- Have been identified by the nurse practitioner’s employer as a nurse practitioner provider of palliative care; or
- Work in collaboration with a palliative care physician or PCFA-approved nurse practitioner.

Each nurse practitioner must resubmit information annually to demonstrate continued compliance with the above eligibility requirements to maintain PCFA nurse practitioner prescriber registration.

Nurse practitioners wishing to apply to the PCFA nurse practitioner prescriber list or to obtain further information can contact either of the following organizations:

Nurse Practitioners’ Association of Ontario
Phone: (416) 593-9779
E-mail: admin@NPAO.org

Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario
Phone: 416-599-1925
E-mail: PCFA@RNAO.ca

Please refer to Part VI-B of the ODB Formulary for more information on the PCFA mechanism.

Dispensing PCFA Drug Products

Pharmacists should refer to part VI-B of the ODB Formulary for instructions on dispensing PCFA drug products.

Pharmacy questions about the PCFA mechanism may be directed to the ODB Help Desk. For all other questions, please send an e-mail to PublicDrugPrgms.moh@ontario.ca