

From: Pharmaceutical Services <Pharm.serv@novascotia.ca>

Date: 2020-05-06T08:56:20-04:00

Subject: Your Inquiry on Behalf of the Concertainty Coalition Regarding Financial and Other Assistance for Cancer Patients during the COVID 19 Pandemic

To: "info@concernityforall.ca" <info@concernityforall.ca>

Cc:

Dear Mr. Bick:

Thank you for your email dated April 14, 2020, requesting financial and other assistance for cancer patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf and I apologize for the delay in response.

The Nova Scotia government is continuing to monitor the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic and assessing how residents can be supported during this unprecedented time. I would like to thank you for writing to us regarding your concerns for cancer patients.

The program year for the Pharmacare programs such as Family Pharmacare and Seniors Pharmacare began April 1st. While deductibles and copayments are still in place for Family Pharmacare, these are based on income and, during the COVID 19 pandemic, we would encourage any beneficiary who has experienced a reduction in their income to contact the Pharmacare office to have their deductible and copayment limits recalculated. Likewise, staff are available by phone to help enroll new beneficiaries and assist them in providing an accurate assessment of their family income should they lose their primary insurance or require supplemental insurance. Other programs such as Drug Assistance for Cancer Patients and various Department of Community Services programs may also be appropriate for some patients.

We understand that some cancer treatment plans may change due to COVID 19. If there a need to deviate from an established protocol, these can be considered on a case by case basis. The staff in the Pharmaceutical Services and Extended Health Benefits branch are in frequent communication with the Cancer Care program and these situations can be individually reviewed.

Regarding drugs that require special authorization, requests for coverage of cancer medications in our Pharmacare programs are reviewed in an expedited fashion and are generally processed on the same day they are received. In addition, any existing special authorizations for medication coverage that were expiring before July 1, 2020, have been extended by an additional three months.

Thank you again for your letter. We appreciate that you have taken the time to provide your organization's suggestions to assist cancer patients during this time.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Coleman

Acting Executive Director

Pharmaceutical Services and Extended Health Benefits