

Ministry of Health
Drugs and Devices Division

Executive Officer Notice: Regulatory Amendments to Ontario Drug Benefit Program Co-payments

13 May 2020

The Ontario government is making changes to help Ontarians continue to have access and be able to afford the prescription medications they need to stay at home and healthy.

The purpose of this notice is to provide you with information regarding recent amendments to Ontario Regulation 201/96 under the *Ontario Drug Benefit Act* (ODBA) to reduce co-payments for Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program recipients.

As of March 20, 2020, the Ministry of Health recommended dispensing no more than a 30-day supply of medication even though a greater supply may be prescribed and payable under the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program. The intention of this recommendation was to protect the drug supply chain and prevent drug shortages caused by significant stockpiling of medications and demand increases for treatment of patients with COVID-19.

While pharmacists are advised to use their professional judgement to provide a larger supply in exceptional circumstances, ODB Program recipients are now paying more than 1 co-payment for the same supply of medication that is now being dispensed in instalments. This has led to cost implications for patients, who may now be paying additional co-payments to receive more than a 30-day supply of medicines.

To help alleviate the unintended cost impact to ODB recipients, Ontario Regulation 201/96 has been amended to reduce the co-payments to \$0 for all prescriptions for more than a 30-day supply that are now being dispensed according to the Ministry's supply limit recommendation. The government will cover the cost of these co-payments during this time. These changes apply until the Ministry's supply limit recommendation has ended or until the end of June 30, 2020, whichever occurs first. Recipient co-payments will then return to their previous amounts (i.e. \$2 or \$6.11, in most cases).

For further information on how these changes are to be implemented in pharmacies, please refer to the accompanying Questions and Answers document that can be found under the 2020 section at the following link:
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/opdp_eo/eo_communiq.aspx

For the authoritative text of the regulations, please visit the e-Laws website at:
<http://www.ontario.ca/laws>

If you have any questions, please contact the ministry by email at PublicDrugPrgrms.moh@ontario.ca or the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Help Desk at 1-800-668-6641.