

New procedures for harm reduction prescriptions

Prescribers and pharmacists are asked to add “SA” (safer alternative) to prescriptions and PharmaNet entries for prescribed harm reduction drugs. This will improve data for safer supply programs and identify unintended risks or harms.

Most prescribed alternatives to the toxic, illicit drug supply are also used for other indications (e.g., pain). Identifying prescriptions as SA allows programs run by the BC Centre on Substance Abuse, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction, and the Ministry of Health to monitor, evaluate, and better mitigate the opioid public health emergency.

Instructions for prescribers

When writing a prescription for a drug to be used as an alternative to the toxic street supply (i.e., for risk mitigation during the dual public health emergencies or as a safer supply option), clearly add “SA” at the bottom of the Directions for Use section of the BC Controlled Prescription form. (See example)

“SA” tells the dispensing pharmacist to tag the prescription with a (non-public) identifying code, for program evaluation purposes, in PharmaNet.

Instructions for pharmacists

When entering a prescription in PharmaNet (new or refill/part-fill) for any drug identified as a safer alternative, or for risk mitigation to support self-isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19, **enter the “SA” intervention code**. Prescribers have been asked to add SA at the bottom of the Directions for Use section (see example). If they use a different notation (e.g. RMG, safer supply), also enter these with the SA code.

This SA code goes in the intervention code field. It acts as a non-public-facing tag so that the prescription can be identified as a safer alternative for program evaluation. The code **does not** go in the prescription direction. Entering the intervention code with each prescription is the **only action required** by pharmacists. There is no PharmaCare fee attached.

Included drugs

The most common drugs prescribed for harm reduction are listed below, but all drugs prescribed for harm reduction should be identified with the “SA” code.

Opioids (not necessarily part of official OAT)

- Fentanyl patches, tablets, and inhalable compounded options

BC CONTROLLED PRESCRIPTION FORM

PERSONAL HEALTH NO. 1234 567 890	PRESCRIBING DATE 05 DAY 11 MONTH 21 YEAR
PATIENT NAME FIRST (GIVEN): Generic MIDDLE/INITIAL: Name LAST (SURNAME): Name	
PATIENT ADDRESS STREET: 123 Main Street CITY: Victoria PROVINCE: BC	DATE OF BIRTH 16 DAY 12 MONTH 76 YEAR
Rx: DRUG NAME AND STRENGTH ONLY ONE DRUG PER FORM VOID IF HANDWRITTEN Hydromorphone 8mg	
QUANTITY (IN UNITS) 784 mg Seven hundred eighty-four milligrams	
THIS AREA MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL FOR OPIOID AGONIST TREATMENT (OAT)	
START DATE: DAY MONTH YEAR	END DATE: DAY MONTH YEAR
TOTAL DAILY DOSE	NUMBER OF DAYS PER WEEK OF DAILY WITNESSED INGESTION
NUMERIC ALPHA	NUMERIC ALPHA
<input type="checkbox"/> NOT AUTHORIZED FOR DELIVERY	
DIRECTION FOR USE, INDICATION FOR THERAPY, OR SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS Hydromorphone 8mg tablets x 14 Take 1–3 tablets every 1 hour as needed Maximum 14 tablets daily Daily dispense, no witness Rx: Nov 8–14	
SA	PRESCRIBER'S SIGNATURE
NO REFILLS PERMITTED VOID AFTER 5 DAYS UNLESS PRESCRIPTION IS FOR OAT	PRESCRIBER'S CONTACT INFORMATION Generic Prescriber 123 Health Street Victoria BC V8Z 4H4
	91-09898 PRESCRIBER ID 555555 FOLIO
PHARMACY USE ONLY	
RECEIVED BY: PATIENT OR AGENT SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE OF DISPENSING PHARMACIST

PHARMACY COPY - COPYING OR DUPLICATING THIS FORM IN ANY WAY CONSTITUTES AN OFFENSE

- Hydromorphone tablets, injectables, and inhalable compounded options, except when prescribed as part of a formal iOAT, or TiOAT treatment program
- Morphine injectable, and immediate or sustained release tablets/capsules, except when prescribed for OAT
- Oxycodone immediate and sustained release formulations
- Sufentanil injection
- Diacetylmorphine (DAM)
- Currently DAM is not part of harm reduction programs. If any form (e.g., inhalable compounded options, injectable) becomes available for harm reduction, the prescriptions should include the SA code, which should be entered with each fill/part fill.

Stimulants

- Dextroamphetamine IR or SR
- Methylphenidate IR or SR
- Any other stimulants prescribed for harm reduction, either commercial or compounded

Benzodiazepines

- Diazepam
- Clonazepam
- Any other benzodiazepines prescribed for harm reduction, either commercial or compounded