

COVID MEDICATION SUPPLY UPDATE

DATE: June 1, 2020

The Nova Scotia Drug Shortage Task Team (NS DSTT) in conjunction with the Provincial Drug Distribution Program (PDDP) continue to monitor supply. Most manufacturers continue to fulfill orders however; have implemented monthly allocations based on historical usage patterns.

Health Canada has identified the highest risk medications. Rather than wait for a shortage to occur, they have classified key medications (sedatives, NMBAs, opioids etc.) at the highest acuity of shortage in anticipation. This initiates processes to solicit manufacturers for mitigation proposals immediately. As proposals are approved they are posted by Health Canada. [List of Drugs for Exceptional Importation and Sale - Canada.ca](#)

A graded list of COVID-related medication supply will be communicated regularly to NSHA. As signals of shortages or anticipated shortages arise this communication will be updated. Supply should be managed judiciously and waste reduction is important.

CRITICALLY LOW

None identified currently

LOW

Epinephrine pre-filled syringes

- Pre-existing shortage situation with 75% monthly allocation. Ampoules are available.

STABLE

Frequent inquiries are received regarding supply of neuromuscular blocking agents, sedatives and vasopressors. Current NSHA levels are at or above historical volumes. Agents of concern include those needing higher doses in COVID patients, those that may have a surge in usage or drugs with sole source manufacturers.

Salbutamol Inhalers

- To help alleviate increased demand and shortage of salbutamol inhalers in Canada due to COVID-19, Health Canada is allowing the importation of a limited supply of Teva's UK-labelled salbutamol inhalers (100 mcg per metered dose). These inhalers are being directed to Canadian hospitals. UK labelled inhalers will be distributed in NSHA in the coming weeks. There are some differences in the product monographs which have been communicated in a Health Canada notice: [Important Safety Information - Importation of Teva UK-labelled Salamol CFC-Free \(Salbutamol Sulfate\) Inhaler due to Shortage - Recalls and safety alerts](#).
- NSHA mitigation strategy: [Optimizing Utilization of Metered Dose Inhalers \(MDI\) and Spacers/Aerochambers upon Patient Transfer of Care from EHS to ED](#)

Cisatracurium

- There is an increased demand in Canada for Omega's Cisatracurium Injection 2 mg/mL, 10 mL vials. Given the medical necessity of this product and to maintain a continued supply, Health Canada has authorized a temporary colour change of the metal seal from teal to red. This temporary change is due to delays in receiving the caps with a teal ferrule and will remain in place until additional inventory is received by Omega. Full Notice: [Cisatracurium Omega Multi-Dose \(Cisatracurium Besylate Injection\): Temporary change of ferrule \(metal seal\) colour to maintain continued supply in Canada - Recalls and safety alerts](#)