

# NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR PHARMACY BOARD

## Guidelines for Pharmacy Practice



## Guidelines for Dispensing Narcotics

Approved by the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board March 1, 2008

On December 17, 2007 the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador issued an **Advisory for Prescribing of Narcotics** to all physicians in the province.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board endorses the recommendations of the CPSNL to physicians, and has adopted a similarly worded advisory policy to all pharmacists in the province that:

*The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board is of the view that it is not generally advisable for pharmacists to dispense a prescription for a narcotic for any period greater than 30 days. In clinical circumstances where physicians need to prescribe a narcotic for a period greater than 30 days, physicians are urged by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador (CPSNL) to issue **part fill** instructions for 30 day intervals.*

*For **part fills**, the total quantity of each **part fill**, and the time interval between **part fills** must be specifically indicated on the prescription. An example of an appropriately written **part fill** is as follows:*

*MC Contin 60 mg (sixty mg)  
1 p.o. Q 12h  
Supply 180 (one hundred and eighty) tablets  
in lots of 60 (sixty)  
at intervals of 30 (thirty) days*

*Physicians have been reminded by the CPSNL that while pharmacists are permitted to dispense partial amounts (or **part fills**) of the total quantity of a narcotic prescribed, pursuant to the provisions of the Narcotic Control Regulations, they are not permitted to dispense refills for narcotic prescriptions.*

*The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board is also of the view that if there are extraordinary circumstances e.g. extended travel, which require that physicians write a prescription for narcotics for a period greater than thirty days and **part fills** are not practical in the circumstances, the quantity dispensed should not exceed the amount required for the time until the patient will be next seen by the physician. The extraordinary circumstances should be documented in the patient's prescription profile.*

*The Board suggests that pharmacists strictly observe this advisory in order to help reduce the risk of large quantities of narcotics being stolen or otherwise diverted to other than prescribed patient use.*



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## Advisory for Prescribing of Narcotics

Following a recent incident of concern in St. John's involving the reported theft of a large quantity of OxyContin from a patient, the College would like to provide physicians with the following advice regarding the prescribing of narcotics.

The College is of the view that it is not generally advisable for physicians to write a prescription for a narcotic for any period greater than 30 days. In clinical circumstances where physicians need to prescribe a narcotic for a period greater than 30 days, physicians are urged to issue **part fill** instructions for 30 day intervals.

For **part fills**, the total quantity of each **part fill**, and the time interval between **part fills** must be specifically indicated on the prescription. An example of an appropriately written **part fill** is as follows:

MC Contin 60 mg (sixty mg)  
1 p.o. Q 12h  
Supply 180 (one hundred and eighty) tablets  
in lots of 60 (sixty)  
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Physicians are reminded that while pharmacists are permitted to dispense partial amounts (or **part fills**) of the total quantity of a narcotic prescribed, pursuant to the provisions of the Narcotic Control Regulations, they are not permitted to dispense refills for narcotic prescriptions.

The College is also of the view that if there are extraordinary circumstances e.g. extended travel, which require that physicians write a prescription for narcotics for a period greater than thirty days and **part fills** are not practical in the circumstances, the quantity prescribed should not exceed the amount required for the time until the patient will be next seen by the physician. The extraordinary circumstances should be documented in the patient's medical record.

The College suggests that physicians strictly observe this advisory in order to help reduce the risk of large quantities of narcotics being stolen or otherwise diverted to other than prescribed patient use.

## NLPDP/PANL Contract

### Policy on Days Supply for Prescriptions Billed to NLPDP

Quantities of Covered Products dispensed should be in accordance with the Authorized Prescriber's Prescription, to a maximum of 90 days supply, with the exception of the following:

1. The first fill of a medication (i.e. a medication, or dosage of a medication, that is new to the patient) shall be dispensed as written, to a maximum of 30 days supply.
2. Controlled substances (**drugs that fall under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, including benzodiazepines**), each of which shall be dispensed as written, to a maximum of 30 days supply.
3. Antidepressant, antipsychotic and injectable agents (excluding long acting formulations), each of which shall be dispensed as written, to a maximum of 30 days supply.
4. Pharmacy manufactured Customized Patient Drug Packing in accordance with the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board, Standard of Pharmacy Practice Guidelines. Each of which shall be dispensed in quantities of 28 to 35 days supply (depending on manufacturing process used by the pharmacy).
5. Where a Special Authorization approval limits the amount of medication to be dispensed at one time.

Non-adherence to the above schedule is acceptable only under circumstances where the dispensing pharmacist makes available, on request from the department, clear, concise documentation supporting a reasonable clinical rationale for non-adherence.