

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR PHARMACY BOARD

Guidelines for Pharmacy Practice



Temporary Pharmacy Closure Due to Pharmacist Absence

Approved March 1, 2008

Background:

Due to the demand for pharmacists' services and associated pharmacist workforce shortages, there are increasing numbers of situations in which pharmacy owners and managers are unable to employ locum pharmacist staff to enable regular pharmacist staff to take vacation leave or to replace pharmacist staff that are unable to work due to urgent medical problems.

In response to the public safety issues associated with these closures, the Registrars of NAPRA's Inter-provincial Pharmacy Regulatory Committee developed the following model guidelines for pharmacy owners who may need to close the pharmacy temporarily because of the absence of a pharmacist.

Board Policy:

It is permissible for a licensed pharmacy to be closed without surrendering its operating license, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. Approval must be obtained from the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board. Except in emergency situations, the pharmacist-in-charge must obtain this approval at least 30 days prior to the temporary closure start date.
2. The pharmacy closure must be for no longer than 14 consecutive days each calendar year, unless specifically approved by the Board.
3. All prepared prescription recipients must be contacted to advice of the closure and given the opportunity to obtain their prepared prescriptions prior to the temporary closure start date.
4. Except in emergency situations, notices to the public (using in-store postings and media announcements) must be made at least 30 days prior to the temporary closure start date.
5. Signage must be posted at the store entrance and a telephone answering machine message must be provided, advising the public about the closure, its duration, the location of the nearest licensed pharmacy, and other information to assist with obtaining necessary pharmacy services during the closure period.
6. Arrangements must be made for emergency access to the pharmacy's patient record in accordance with privacy guidelines/legislation.
7. In single-pharmacy communities, alternate arrangements must be made with local prescribers or pharmacies in nearby communities.