



TPP Alberta: COVID-19 Resources

Health Canada s56 (1) exemption for controlled substances

On March 19, 2020, Health Canada issued s56 (1) exemptions to support Canadians in accessing controlled substances when needed for medical treatments during the COVID-19 pandemic. This exemption has been extended to September 30, 2021.

- Read the [Section 56 Exemption](#) issued by Health Canada.
- Read the Section 56 (1) Frequently Asked Questions for further information and clarification on the exemption. [Section 56 \(1\) FAQs](#).
- Read the joint statement by ACP and CPSA [Joint CPSA/ACP Statement](#)

TPP Alberta Guidance

Prescribers and pharmacists should continue to adhere to the policies outlined in the [TPP Alberta Guide](#), unless doing so puts them or their patients in a position that contravenes the public health advice for social distancing and self-isolation.

The temporary exemptions from Health Canada mean that:

- TPP monitored medications, including Type 1 drugs, can be transferred from one pharmacy to another.
- Prescribers can issue verbal orders for TPP monitored drugs. It is TPP's position that verbal orders should be limited to situations where issuing a written prescription is not reasonably possible, e.g. prescriber is self-isolating or providing virtual care.
- Pharmacy employees can deliver prescriptions of controlled substances to patients' homes or other locations where they may be (i.e., self-isolating).
- Pharmacists may renew prescriptions for TPP monitored medications for the purpose of continuity of care.

A TPP secure prescription form will not be required for prescriptions for Type 1 TPP medications that are:

- sent by verbal order from physicians and other prescribers, or
- written by pharmacists.

It is not necessary to create a 'follow-up' prescription on a TPP secure form for the above situations.

As verbal prescriptions bring the risk of errors and diversion, pharmacists should take any steps necessary to authenticate the source of the verbal prescriptions, while prescribers should be prepared to provide additional information for verification.

Preferentially, TPP secure prescription forms should be used to prevent diversion and protect the public.

Depending on drug shortages and supply, prescription dispense quantities may be reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.