

Guidance for Community Pharmacy Model of Care for COVID-19

Effective 1 October 2023

Introduction

The model of care for COVID-19 is changing from 1 October 2023 to a targeted approach to support those most in need of care and identified as being at higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance document is to

1. Update the community pharmacy sector on the Model of Care for COVID-19 Care in the Community (CitC) – Pharmacy Services.
2. Provide clear concise guidance for the pharmacy sector.

Background

To align with the updated model of care for COVID-19 from 1 October 2023, funding for COVID-19 care provided by both community pharmacy and primary care is being scaled to transition to a post-COVID-19 business as usual model.

The following principles continue to underpin funding decisions:

- Optimising access to antiviral therapy by targeting those who Pharmac identify as being at higher risk of severe outcomes.
- Ensuring the resilience of our COVID-19 response while we transition to the post pandemic business as usual management of COVID-19.
- Mitigating the pressure COVID-19 places on the broader healthcare system by focusing on ensuring consistent access to antiviral therapy through both community pharmacy and primary care.

Eligibility for Funding

This service recognises that some Service Users seeking Pharmacist-Only Supply of COVID-19 antivirals will be found to be ineligible.

If a provider consults with a Service User and discovers they do not meet the Pharmac access criteria for funded COVID-19 antivirals, the provider can claim the COVID-19 Antivirals Eligibility Review fee.

If a provider consults with the Service User and discovers they meet the Pharmac access criteria for funded COVID-19 antivirals, but these medicines are not appropriate for clinical reasons, the provider can claim the Medicines Management Consultation fee.

As per the current Service Specification, the reason the antivirals were not supplied must be documented.

Table 1: Services for Community Pharmacy Funding

Pricing Item	Description
COVID-19 antivirals Pharmac Eligibility Review	Those who do not meet antiviral access criteria
Medicines Management Consult	Those who meet antiviral access criteria
After-hours weekday and weekend Medicines Management Consult	Those who meet antiviral access criteria
Compliance Packaging	When associated with supply of antivirals
Reimbursement for Medicine Delivery, Per Delivery	When associated with supply of antivirals

Changes to existing services

- COVID-19 antivirals Pharmac Eligibility Reviews are to be limited to 15-minutes; previously multiple 15-minute blocks could be claimed.
- Medicines Management Consult and After-hours Medicine Management Consult:
 - Providers to claim in 15-minute blocks rather than 30-minute blocks (the hourly rate remains unchanged) up to a maximum of 45 minutes if required.
 - The scope of the service is changing, activities associated with supply of antivirals for COVID-19 either as a pharmacist only medicine or pursuant to a prescription are retained. Other activities previously covered by this service line, such as supply of self-care medicines and emergency supply of medicines, are no longer within the scope.
- Reimbursement for Medicine Delivery has been increased to reflect recent increases in courier charges associated with transporting medicines.

Additional notes

- Except for the COVID-19 Antivirals Pharmac Eligibility Review, the service schedule only applies to people who meet the Pharmac access criteria for antivirals.
- Ordinary business hours are 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays in the providers geographic area) or as agreed between an individual

provider and their district, as per the Integrated Community Pharmacy Services Agreement (ICPSA).

- Conditions of claiming:
 - No fees are to be charged to service users
 - No simultaneous claiming against any other funding stream

Table 2: Removed Funded Services from Community Pharmacy (effective 1 October 2023)

Service	Rationale
In-Home Visit (for 1 pharmacist), Per 60-minutes	Targeting services towards supporting access to antiviral therapy, for those who meet the Pharmac access criteria Transitioning to post-pandemic business as usual management of the Community Pharmacy Anticoagulation Management Service (CPAMS) and Opioid Substitution Therapy Service.
In-Home Visit (for an additional support person), Per 60-minutes	
In-Home Visit - Mileage rate, Per kilometre	
Reimbursement for prescription co-payments	Removed as from 1 July 2023, people no longer need to pay the standard \$5 prescription co-payment for regular prescriptions.

Primary care guidance

Primary care (general practice, urgent care, and Hauora providers) funding guidance also has a scaled approach from 1 October 2023.

This aligns with the principle of access and supply of antiviral medications to those at higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19.

The full Guidance document for the Primary Care Model of Care for COVID-19 can be found [here](#).