



COVID-19 Response Efforts

Updated 3/16/2020

The State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy is committed to protecting the health and safety of Ohioans during the COVID-19 outbreak. This document outlines the Board's COVID-19 guidance and response efforts, including the issuance of waivers to assist our licensees in addressing operational needs, and will be updated regularly.

For more information on the state's efforts to address coronavirus, visit www.coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.

Practicing Pharmacy in a Safe and Effective Manner **NEW!**

Section 4729.55 of the Revised Code requires a pharmacy to implement adequate safeguards that allow pharmacy professionals employed by a terminal distributor to practice pharmacy in a safe and effective manner. This includes implementing [ODH recommended safeguards](#) to protect pharmacy professionals (pharmacists, interns, technician, and support personnel) and patients during a public health emergency.

The Board strongly encourages all Ohio-licensed pharmacies to implement the following safeguards to ensure the practice of pharmacy can be conducted in a safe and effective manner:

- Establish a process for older adults, pregnant women, and individuals with chronic health conditions to pick up medications without waiting in line.
- Implement infection control procedures, especially for waiting areas, to include the following:
 - Make sure staff maintain a distance of 3 feet from asymptomatic patients and at least 6 feet from those actively coughing (see [Important COVID-19 Reminders](#) section of this document for more information on establishing alternative distribution methods for patients [i.e. curbside pickup, drive-thru, etc.]).

Pharmacies with workspaces that allow patients to get closer than the recommended distance should be posting signage or utilizing other methods to ensure patients are maintained at a safe distance.



Pharmacists should also use their professional judgement, including the availability of universal precautions, to determine if it is appropriate to administer immunizations or other medications.

- o Regularly clean and disinfect counters, credit/debit card devices, waiting areas, and other spaces where public interaction occurs with an EPA-approved disinfectant. Clean at least every hour or after every 10 patients, whichever is more frequent. If cleaning and disinfecting products are in short supply, the Ohio Department of Health has developed the following guidance:
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home/covid-19-checklists/cleaning-disinfecting-alternatives-covid-19-checklist>
 - o If available, place alcohol-based hand sanitizer next to the checkout window so people can sanitize their hands after using common items, like the pen used to sign for prescriptions or devices used to process credit/debit card transactions.
REMINDER: Manual signatures from patients are not required by Board of Pharmacy rule (see [Important COVID-19 Reminders](#) section of this document for more information).
 - o Provide regular breaks for staff to engage in proper hand hygiene (i.e. routinely washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds).
- Monitor all staff for sickness regularly. Take temperatures once per shift and send them home if they have symptoms of a respiratory infection.

Board Office Hours

In order to help contain the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy has closed its offices to the general public and Board staff will be working remotely until further notice. Please be advised that it may take longer than usual to receive a response.

If you need to contact the Board for any reason, please use the [Contact Us](#) form on our website. A member of our staff will reply to your email as soon as possible. Licensees may also contact their assigned Board field staff member.

For emergencies during non-business hours (8 am – 5 pm), the Board’s emergency line is still available by calling the main office number 614-466-4143.

COVID-19 Waivers and Guidance for Licensees

Waiver Issue Date	Descriptions
3/13/2020	Authorized the practice of remote order entry for all licensed/registered pharmacy personnel (pharmacists, pharmacy interns, and technicians). The guidance can be accessed here .

3/14/2020	Authorized the compounding and sale of certain alcohol-based hand sanitizer products by Ohio-licensed pharmacies and outsourcing facilities. This guidance can be accessed here .
3/14/2020	Authorized licensees conducting sterile compounding to reuse certain personal protective equipment (PPE). This guidance can be accessed here .
3/16/2020 - NEW!	Authorized automatic exemptions to rule authorizing the compounding of drugs in shortage (4729-16-10) and expands the definition of drug shortage. This guidance can be accessed here .
3/16/2020 - NEW!	Authorized the extension of emergency refills. This guidance can be accessed here .

Licensees seeking waivers to Ohio laws and regulations governing the practice of pharmacy or distribution of dangerous drugs due to COVID-19 can submit a request to: compliance@pharmacy.ohio.gov. Please include a detailed justification for the waiver request and the expected time period.

Important COVID-19 Reminders

Delivery Services **NEW!**

- Pharmacies are permitted to use couriers and other delivery services (i.e. United States postal service or common or contract carrier) to deliver patient medications. Be advised that pharmacies seeking to return drugs to stock shelves that cannot be delivered to the patient are required to have policies and procedures in place pursuant to paragraphs (B)(6) and (B)(8) of rule [4729-5-14](#) of the Administrative Code.
- Additionally, nothing in rule or law prohibits using technicians, interns or support personnel to deliver medications to patients waiting at the store (ex. for curbside pickup).

Providing Services at Alternate Locations **NEW!**

- Pharmacies and other locations licensed as terminal distributors of dangerous drugs can provide services outside of the pharmacy as long as they are on the physical premises of the licensed location (i.e. setting up temporary drive-thru to limit pharmacy personnel exposure, offering immunizations at another location in the store, etc.).
- Pharmacies are reminded that any drugs removed from the pharmacy to provide additional on-site services must be under the supervision of a pharmacist to deter and detect possible diversion. **NOTE:** This does not apply to dispensed medications that are being provided to patients by pharmacy technicians, interns or support personnel (for example, for curbside pickup or temporary drive thru).
- If seeking to provide services off-site (except for delivery) involving drugs, please refer to the temporary off-site requirements in rule [4729:5-3-13](#) of the Administrative Code.

Use of Signatures for Prescription Pick-Up **NEW!**

- Please be advised that the use of signatures for picking up a prescription is not required by Board of Pharmacy rules. For patient counseling, a verbal offer or providing an offer to counsel in writing (i.e. a telephone number where a pharmacist may be reached) is required under the [patient counseling rule](#).

Administration of Testing **NEW!**

- Currently, pharmacists, pharmacy interns, and certified technicians are authorized to administer CLIA-waived testing (OAC [4729:1-3-01](#), OAC [4729:2-3-05](#), and OAC [4729:3-3-05](#)).
- Additional guidance for COVID-19 testing will be forthcoming with the increased availability of testing.

Combining Refills **NEW!**

- Section [4729.40](#) of the Revised Code authorizes a pharmacist who is filling or refilling a prescription that has one or more refills to dispense the drug in a quantity or amount that varies from the quantity or amount that would otherwise be dispensed. Guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Emergency Refills

- Ohio law authorizes a pharmacist to dispense medications without a prescription under certain conditions. Updated guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Pharmacist Consult Agreements

- Ohio law authorizes one or more pharmacists practicing under a consult agreement with one or more physicians to (1) manage a patient's drug therapy (including authorizing refills) for specified diagnoses or diseases; and (2) order and evaluate blood and urine tests. Guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Boards of Health – Public Health Emergencies

- The Board has issued the following resolutions that apply to local boards of health during public health emergencies:
 - Temporary Removal of Drugs: The Board authorized a board of health, as defined in section 3701.048 of the Revised Code, that is licensed as a terminal distributor of dangerous drugs to temporarily remove dangerous drugs upon the governor's declaration of an emergency that affects public health. A complete copy of the resolution can be accessed [here](#).
 - Waiver of Wholesale Licensure Requirements: Pursuant to section 4729.25 of the Revised Code, the Board finds it is in the public's interest to waive the drug distributor licensure requirements pursuant to section 4729.52 of the Revised Code for a board of health, as defined in section 3701.048 of the Revised Code, that is

licensed as a terminal distributor of dangerous drugs (TDDD) for the purpose of distributing dangerous drugs to another TDDD during a declared public health emergency or emergency preparedness incident. A complete copy of the resolution can be accessed [here](#).

Naloxone Distribution by Mail or Delivery Personnel

- The Board has authorized the distribution of naloxone via mail (or other contract carrier) or delivery personnel. A complete copy of the resolution can be accessed [here](#).