

March 21, 2020

Regarding: inappropriate and questionable prescribing/stockpiling of potential COVID-19 treatment drugs

Dear Prescriber/Pharmacist,

This is a courtesy communication to inform you that inappropriate and questionable prescribing of drugs that may show promise in the treatment of COVID-19 by New Mexico practitioners has been reported. These actions relate to prescribing without an indication, for self, family, office staff, quantities prescribed, and other issues. Inappropriate, questionable prescribing/stockpiling of these drugs, including chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, mefloquine, Kaletra, azithromycin, etc. can cause and contribute to drug shortages, and result in patients with serious chronic medical conditions not receiving necessary treatment. To this end, and until the NM COVID-19 pandemic is resolved:

- Prescribers are asked to prescribe appropriately, exercise good professional judgment and adhere to evidence based standards of practice in their prescribing decisions. In instances where the patient was not established on such a medication prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, practitioners should include a diagnosis, consistent with the evidence for its prescribed use, on each prescription.
- The NM Board of Nursing reminds APRNs that for prescribing to occur, a clear valid practitioner-patient relationship must exist.
- The NM Board of Pharmacy does not intend to take action against a pharmacist or pharmacy that declines to fill a questionable prescription for such medications, or limits the day supply dispensed for an acute condition to the recognized duration of treatment for the same based on the drug. Pharmacists are expected to exercise due diligence and professional judgment in such determinations, including communicating with the practitioner and patient as practicable. Pharmacists are to be aware of current recommendations and indications for the prescribed drug as part of the determination whether to fill a such a prescription.

Questionable prescribing may be reported to the prescribing practitioner's licensing board.

Thank you,

New Mexico Board of Pharmacy
New Mexico Board of Nursing
New Mexico Medical Board