

Prescription Monitoring Program – NL

Information for the Public



Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Prescription Monitoring Program – NL supports the Provincial Government’s Opioid Action Plan to help address the growing opioid issue.

The program aims to help prescribers and dispensers –physicians, nurse practitioners, dentists, pharmacists and dispensing registered nurses – make the most informed decisions when choosing to prescribe or dispense a monitored drug.

The Prescription Monitoring Act governs the program and came into effect on January 1, 2018. To view a copy of the Act, please visit [Prescription Monitoring Act](#).

Under the Act, by June 30, 2018, all prescribers and dispensers in Newfoundland and Labrador will be required to check their patient’s medication profile using the provincial electronic health record, now called HEALTHe NL, before prescribing and dispensing a monitored drug.

For more information on the Prescription Monitoring Program – NL, email info@PMPNL.ca.

For more information on HEALTHe NL, call 709-752-6006 or 1-877-752-6006 or email healthenl@nlchi.nl.ca

Q What is the Prescription Monitoring Program?

A Prescription Monitoring Program – NL is another action of the Provincial Government’s Opioid Action Plan aimed at addressing the growing opioid issue.

The purpose of the program is to help prescribers and dispensers make the most informed decisions when choosing a monitored drug to treat a patient.

Using the provincial electronic health record, prescribers and dispensers will have access to up-to-date and accurate patient medication profiles to help inform and support the needs of their patients.

All provinces, with the exception of Quebec, have some form of a prescription monitoring program.

Q What health care professionals will be a part of the program?

A Prescribers and dispensers as defined in the Prescription Monitoring Act will be a part of the program throughout the province including physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, dentists and pharmacists.

Q What about veterinarians?

A While veterinarians fall under the definition of prescriber, they are excluded in the regulations at this time.

Q How do I know what drugs are to be monitored by the program?

A Opioid medications, including tramadol, are being monitored by the program. As the program matures, other medications may be added.

Q When will the Prescription Monitoring Act come into effect?

A The Prescription Monitoring Act came into effect on January 1, 2018.

Under the Act, by June 30, 2018, all prescribers and dispensers in Newfoundland and Labrador will be required to check their patient's medication profile using the provincial electronic health record, HEALTHe NL, before prescribing and dispensing a monitored drug.

To view a copy of the Act, please visit [Prescription Monitoring Act](#).

Q What are the benefits of the program?

A Some important public health goals that are expected from the program include an increase in the quality of patient care, greater confidence when prescribing and dispensing drugs and greater efficiency and coordination of care.

The program is also expected to lead to a decrease in drug misuse, and prevent or reduce hospitalizations and deaths related to drug misuse.

Q How will information from the program be used?

A The information that will be generated from the program will help:

- Promote appropriate prescribing and dispensing practices;
- Provide information and education to prescribers and dispensers;
- Identify potential instances of drug abuse and misuse;
- Reduce drug abuse and misuse; and,
- Reduce the risk of addiction and death resulting from drug abuse or misuse.

The information will also be used to inform the Provincial Government on the need for further intervention services, educational programming and to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Q Why do we need the Prescription Monitoring Program?

A Prescription drug abuse is an issue that impacts the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians every day. It will take a collective effort to make headway to address and reduce this serious public health issue.

Prescription monitoring programs can help improve drug prescribing, lower or prevent risks related to certain drugs, and can help identify patients who may be at risk of addiction.

The program is not intended to prevent the use of prescription drugs for legitimate medical purposes. There are many reasons why certain drugs are the most appropriate treatment for a patient's condition. The program is not meant to deter prescribers from making an informed clinical decision.

Q Who provides oversight of the Prescription Monitoring Program?

A The Minister of Health and Community Services provides oversight of the program. An Advisory Committee will be appointed by the Minister to provide advice and recommendations. Additionally, a Prescription Monitoring Program Consultants Committee will be appointed by the Minister. It will make recommendations and provide a critical and clinical lens to generated reports which require review. Administration of the program will be carried out by the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI).

Q Can personal health information be shared with the program?

A Under the Prescription Monitoring Act, prescribers and dispensers must provide information which may include personal health information when it is requested by the administrator of the program. This requirement overrides any confidentiality provision in the Personal Health Information Act. Therefore, in complying with such a request, a prescriber or dispenser is not in violation of the Personal Health Information Act.

Q Can you opt out of the Prescription Monitoring Program?

A No. All drug prescriptions provided by prescribers and filled in pharmacies in Newfoundland and Labrador are included in this program.

Q Will information be shared with a regulatory authority or law enforcement?

A The purpose of the program is to help prescribers and dispensers make the most informed decisions. The intention is not to police these professionals.

Prescribers and dispensers who are performing their duties as health care professionals in accordance with their regulatory guidelines and the Prescription Monitoring Act would not have personal health information related to their patients shared with their regulatory bodies.

If activities that are deemed to contravene the Prescription Monitoring Act are discovered, they would be reviewed by the Prescription Monitoring Program Consultants Committee and possibly shared with the regulatory body or law enforcement if warranted.

Q Will the program capture prescriptions from another jurisdiction?

A Yes. Medication profiles are maintained for all patients that have prescriptions filled in pharmacies in Newfoundland and Labrador even if they are not from the province.

Q If a member of the public has a concern or complaint about prescribing or dispensing activities who should they contact?

A The most appropriate place to express a concern or complaint about a prescriber or dispenser would be with the regulatory bodies of those health care providers.

If a member of the public felt their concern or complaint was related to criminal activity, they could also file a report with the police.

Q Didn't the province already have a prescription monitoring program?

A Yes. There was a previous paper-based prescription monitoring program. Without an electronic system to capture the dispensing of prescriptions, it had limited success. Using the Pharmacy Network, a component of the provincial electronic health record, the necessary tools are in place to more successfully implement a prescription monitoring program.