

**NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Antiviral Access for the Underinsured and Uninsured**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Healthcare Providers

Q: What is the purpose of the new DOHMH antiviral access program for uninsured and underinsured populations?

A: This new program will permit financially eligible patients to obtain antiviral medication to which they might not otherwise have access due to the expense of the medication. DOHMH will provide antiviral medication to participating pharmacies who have agreed to dispense the antiviral medication to eligible patients for an administrative fee of no more than five (\$5.00) dollars. The full procedure for determining eligibility and prescribing these low-cost antiviral drugs to patients is diagrammed in the attached Provider Decision Tree.

Q: What medications are available through this program?

A: NYC maintains a supply of Tamiflu® and Relenza® for use during a pandemic. Tamiflu® 75 mg, Tamiflu® suspension (12 mg/mL) and Relenza® 10 mg are available through this program. However, the supply of Relenza is fairly limited.

Q: What is the role of the healthcare provider in ensuring that eligible patients receive the antiviral drugs?

A: DOHMH is relying on healthcare providers to direct eligible patients to a participating pharmacy with an appropriate notation on the prescription directing the pharmacist to dispense antiviral medication supplied by DOHMH. DOHMH is requesting that providers who prescribe the above medications to treat patients with influenza like illness (ILI) do the following:

1. Ask patient whether he or she has prescription drug coverage.
2. If patient has such coverage, write the prescription as usual and direct patient to his or her pharmacy.
3. If patient does not have prescription drug coverage, inform the patient that the medication will cost \$130 - \$150, and ask the patient whether he or she can afford to pay for it.
4. If the patient states he or she is unable to pay for the medication, providers should clearly write on the prescription "Dispense from NYC Stock" and direct the patient to a participating pharmacy.

Q: Which pharmacies are participating in this program?

A: All Duane Reade, Rite Aid and Walgreens pharmacies in the five boroughs of New York City are authorized to dispense antiviral drugs supplied by DOHMH.

Q: Do providers have to register to participate in this program?

A: No. Healthcare providers do not need to register to participate in the program. To obtain low-cost antiviral drugs for your patients, simply follow the procedure outlined in the attached Provider Decision Tree.

Q: What patients are eligible to receive antivirals through this program?

A: All individuals in New York City without medical insurance or prescription drug coverage and who are unable to pay, regardless of nationality, residency or employment status, are eligible for this program. Eligibility is determined solely by the patient's healthcare provider as outlined in the attached figure.

Q: What pharmacies have these antivirals?

A: All Duane Reade, Rite Aid and Walgreens locations in the five boroughs of NYC are authorized to dispense these antiviral drugs.

Q: What documents do providers need to review to determine patient eligibility for the program?

A: No documents are required. The healthcare provider does not need to see any documents to determine that a patient is eligible for this program. The physician should simply follow the procedure outlined in the attached Decision Flow Chart.

Q: What documents should the patient need to bring to the pharmacy to receive low-cost antiviral drugs?

A: The patient need only bring his or her prescription. No additional documents are required.

Q: Can the patient have someone else pick up the medication for him or her at the pharmacy?

A: Yes. Any person can pick up the medication. The person picking up the medication must know the patient's name and sign an attestation stating that he or she will give the medication to the patient identified on the prescription.

Q: Does the patient need to show proof of identification at the pharmacy to receive the antiviral medication?

A. No. The patient does not need to bring any proof of identification. However, either the patient or the individual picking up medication must sign an attestation stating that he or she is the patient or is picking up medication for the patient, and that the patient cannot afford the medication at the time of receipt and that neither the patient nor the person picking up medication will sell the medication.

Q: Are e-prescriptions and telephone orders accepted for this program?

A. Yes. A provider may indicate “Dispense from NYC Stock” on an e-prescription or over the telephone.

Q: If a patient attempts to use his or her prescription drug coverage to obtain antivirals, but finds that he or she cannot afford the co-payment, is the patient still eligible for low-cost antivirals?

A: Yes. If an individual tells a participating pharmacist that he or she cannot afford the cost of the co-payment, but the healthcare provider has not written “Dispense from NYC stock” on the prescription, DOHMH has directed pharmacies to contact the healthcare provider to obtain authority to dispense the drugs from the NYC stock. In these circumstances the provider may, in its discretion, authorize the pharmacist to “Dispense from NYC Stock.”

Q: How will a participating pharmacy obtain authority from a healthcare provider during non-business hours?

A: If the provider is unavailable during non-business hours, the participating pharmacies will contact the Poison Control Center for authority to dispense from the NYC stock. The pharmacist will supply the healthcare provider number to the Poison Control Center along with the prescription number.

Q: What does the pharmacist do if he or she is concerned about the authenticity of a prescription?

A: The pharmacist may contact the provider to verify the authenticity of the prescription.

Q: Are there any mechanisms in place to protect against fraud?

A: Yes. DOHMH, along with the assistance of the participating pharmacies, will track how much medication is dispensed along with the provider number who has written the prescription. These will be reviewed to protect against abuse. However, healthcare providers are strongly encouraged to take full advantage of this program for eligible their patients.

Q: What is an EUA?

A: An Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) may be issued by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to allow either the use of an unapproved medical product or an unapproved use of an approved medical product during certain types of emergencies with specified agents. For the purposes of this program, the EUA covers the dispensing of Tamiflu suspension that has expired but whose shelf-life has been extended as part of the federal Shelf-Life Extension Program. There are other off-label uses for antiviral medications authorized under the EUA. They can be found on the FDA's website at:

<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ucm153228.htm>

Q: Who do I call if I have questions related to this program?

A: Providers may call the Provider Access Line (PAL) at 1-866-NYC-DOH1 (1-866-692-3641) during normal business hours, Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.