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ORDER OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH RELATED TO PHARMACY PRACTICE

On March 10, 2020, Governor Charles D. Baker declared a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth to respond to the spread of COVID-19. The Public Health Council has approved and authorized me to take such actions, incur such liabilities, and establish such rules, requirements, and procedures which are necessary to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in order to protect the health and welfare of the people of the Commonwealth, consistent with the Governor's declaration.

Accordingly, having received that authorization from the Council and with the approval of the Governor, I issue the following Order:

I. Remote Processing of Prescriptions by Pharmacy Technicians

Pharmacy technicians licensed by the Board of Registration in Pharmacy ("Board") may perform remote processing of patient-specific prescriptions on behalf of a Massachusetts licensed pharmacy or health care facility without direct on-site supervision by a Board-licensed pharmacist. The pharmacy, pharmacist, and pharmacy technicians shall comply with guidance published by the Board regarding remote processing.

II. Implementation of Garb Conservation During Periods of Shortage

Retail pharmacies and institutional pharmacies may engage in methods to conserve sterile compounding garb that may not be consistent with USP <797>. The pharmacy, pharmacist, and pharmacy technicians shall comply with guidance published by the Board regarding garb conservation.

III. Emergency Authorization to Practice Pharmacy in Massachusetts

A pharmacist holding a pharmacist license in good standing from a state other than Massachusetts may practice pharmacy on behalf of a Massachusetts licensed pharmacy or health care facility during the State of Emergency upon receipt of written approval from the Board.

A pharmacy technician holding a pharmacy technician license in good standing from a state other than Massachusetts may work within a Massachusetts licensed pharmacy or health care facility during the State of Emergency without a Massachusetts technician license upon receipt of written approval from the Board.

A pharmacist and pharmacy technician authorized by this Order to practice in Massachusetts shall comply with guidance published by the Board.

IV. Emergency Prescription Refills

In the event a patient's prescription does not have any remaining refills and the patient's prescriber is not available to authorize a new prescription, pharmacists and pharmacies are authorized to dispense a refill of medication for continuation of therapy for a chronic condition in accordance with the pharmacist's professional judgment. The pharmacy, pharmacist, and pharmacy technicians shall comply with guidance published by the Board regarding emergency refills.

V. Central Filling of Prescriptions by Massachusetts Pharmacies

Retail pharmacies and institutional pharmacies may engage in central filling activities of patient specific prescriptions or orders, including compounded sterile and complex non-sterile preparations. A pharmacy engaging in central filling activities authorized by this Order may provide central filling for one or more pharmacies. All licensees engaging in central filling activity shall comply with guidance published by the Board.

All applicable statutes, regulations, and guidance not inconsistent with this Order remain in effect.

This Order shall be effective immediately and shall remain in effect until the State of Emergency is terminated by the Governor, or until rescinded by me, whichever shall happen first.

IT IS SO ORDERED

Monica Bharel, MD, MPH
Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

March 24, 2020