



Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Pharmacy Impacts

What is the Coronavirus?

Corona Virus, or “COVID-19”, is a novel (new) Coronavirus strain originating in China that was announced to be a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 03/11/2020. Other “Coronavirus” strains that we already know about include many common cold strains as well as several more serious strains such as SARS and MERS viruses. It can be spread from person to person, and has currently spread to most corners of the globe as the outbreak is unfolding. This virus is currently more contagious and also has a higher mortality rate than the seasonal flu (influenza virus).

Symptoms

The most common symptoms include a fever, dry cough, and in some cases shortness of breath. More severe symptoms that would necessitate emergency medical care include severe shortness of breath, persistent chest pain/pressure, bluish lips/face, and confusion/lethargy. Symptoms develop anywhere from two to 14 days after exposure to the virus.

Treatment and Prevention:

Currently, there are no antivirals or other medications recommended by the Center of Disease Control (CDC) to treat the COVID-19 viral infection, yet several antivirals are currently being investigated for efficacy in different countries. There is also not yet a vaccine available to prevent transmission. The CDC predicts a vaccine will not be widely available for at least 12-18 months.

As there are no medications or vaccines yet available, the best way to prevent viral infection is to avoid exposure to the pathogen. The CDC recommends social distancing, including avoiding being out in the public or any gatherings with large amounts of people. They also recommend staying six feet away from others if possible. This is because it spreads mostly from respiratory droplets from infected people coughing and sneezing, and also by touching contaminated surfaces.

Besides avoiding close contact, the CDC also recommends frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds after being in a public place or coughing/sneezing/blowing one’s nose. If not available, then the use of an alcohol based hand sanitizer is recommended. In addition, the CDC recommends avoiding touching your eyes/nose/mouth with unwashed hands.

Relevance to the industry

Patients may either be exposed or become infected with the COVID-19 virus. Other patients may express worry about being able to get their medications filled for fear of either drug shortages or pharmacies closing. In addition, new claims may develop where a worker was exposed to and infected with the COVID-19 virus (e.g., a healthcare worker treating infected patients in a long-term care facility).

In Response, CorVel will:

- Allow early refills of medications when necessary and mandated. We will be reaching out to claims specialists by phone or email to communicate when we receive these requests. If we cannot reach the claims specialist, our clinical staff will be consulted.
- Expect requests for 90 day supplies instead of 30 day supplies will increase as patients and physicians try to receive a larger supply of dispensed medications to help prepare and also to decrease unnecessary trips to a pharmacy. We will communicate with claims specialists when these requests are received.
 - We will be promoting extended approvals when possible for chronic claims and chronic medications. Exceptions to this will be acute cases, acute fills, and special medication classes such as opioids.
- Work with patients to get them set up with Caremark Mail Order pharmacy services if desired to help avoid exposure to the public by going to pharmacies.
 - Please note that many retail pharmacies are also offering free delivery to patients during this time to also help them limit their exposure to the public.
- Encourage patients to not go to a pharmacy if they have symptoms that may indicate infection such as a fever or shortness of breath. We also encourage patients to use the pharmacy drive-through if possible to also help limit their exposure to others.

CorVel's PBM Partner, CVS Caremark update on drug shortages during Coronavirus Outbreak

“What is CVS Health doing to address potential drug shortages related to the current COVID-19 outbreak?”

We are closely monitoring the global manufacturing environment. We do not see any disruptions to the supply chain that will affect the ability of our CVS Caremark pharmacies to fill prescriptions for plan members, now and into the near future. We always encourage members to refill maintenance medications in a timely manner.

- Our monitoring process occurs real-time. We monitor the supply of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) as well as brand and generic pharmaceutical products.
- In addition to CVS Health's monitoring, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is closely monitoring medications that are made in China or rely solely on active pharmaceutical ingredients from China. The agency also said it has reminded more than 180 manufacturers to notify the FDA of any potential supply chain disruptions.
- The FDA has communicated that they are aware of a shortage of one drug due to the Coronavirus. The FDA has not disclosed the affected drug.
- Based on current demand and CVS Health's real-time process to monitor the supply of medications that our members and customers rely on us to provide, adequate supply is available across the product lines we use. Manufacturers tell us they don't anticipate any immediate issues around supply.
- Given the fluid nature of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we will continue to monitor the situation and work with our suppliers to address issues as they arise. We will alert clients to potential disruptions and share our contingency plans to address them.
- Our contingency plan to address a Coronavirus (COVID-19) shortage would depend on the product affected and severity of the shortage.

- As appropriate, your account team will notify you if a complete drug shortage for a product is anticipated or occurs due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Notification will include specific information about the shortage, as well as recommended steps to care for affected members. Additionally, we will share data including the number of your plan members utilizing the affected medication.
- Marketplace drug shortages are not unprecedented. As one of the world's largest providers of pharmaceuticals, CVS Caremark is able to locate and purchase medications, making it easier for plan members to obtain their prescriptions in a ©2020 CVS Health and/or one of its affiliates: Confidential & Proprietary timely manner. During normal course of business CVS Caremark faces and responds to drug shortages. We are well equipped to develop an appropriate response plan in the event a Coronavirus (COVID-19) drug shortage occurs."

For more information about the Coronavirus, Please visit the CDC's "frequently asked questions" website available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>