

POLICY CATEGORY: Policy
POLICY NAME: Prescription Lockers
POLICY NUMBER: GR-PL-PLO-01
AUTHORITY DERIVED FROM: Council
ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: April 5, 2024
ORIGINAL MOTION NUMBER: C-24-04-07
LATEST REVISION DATE:
LATEST MOTION NUMBER:

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New Brunswick College of Pharmacists
Ordre des pharmaciens du Nouveau-Brunswick

Policy: Prescription Lockers

CONTENTS

Definitions 3

Purpose 3

Introduction 3

Locker System Requirements: 4

Procedures 4

Privacy 5

Exclusions 5

Quality Assurance 5

DEFINITIONS

Prescription Locker: A mechanical system that securely stores completed patient-specific prescription and non-prescription drugs, devices and related supplies for pick up.

Electronic Locker: Lockers that use electronic or battery-operated locks that do not require the use of physical keys for access.

Smart Locker: A locker that uses an electromechanical lock that is designed to perform locking and unlocking operations on a door when it receives a prompt via an electronic keypad, biometric sensor, access card, Bluetooth, or from a registered mobile device.

PURPOSE

This policy provides information on the use of Prescription Lockers in pharmacies, such that requirements for safety, accuracy, security and patient confidentiality are achieved.

INTRODUCTION

The use of Prescription Lockers has the potential to offer improved patient access to medications. Their use also presents potential risks. Potential risks include breaches in confidentiality, and safety concerns associated with a decrease in patient-pharmacist interaction. This Policy is written with the intent to allow pharmacies to use Prescription Locker systems, while mitigating those risks. When deciding how to implement a Prescription Locker system into practice, pharmacy teams must consider how they will continue to ensure patient confidentiality, as well as maintaining all applicable legislation and Regulations, as well as Model Standards of Practice (MSOP¹).

¹ <https://www.napra.ca/publication/model-standards-of-practice-for-pharmacists-and-pharmacy-technicians-in-canada/>

Policy

LOCKER SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The locker system being used must fulfill the following requirements:

- Located within the pharmacy.²
- Accessible to patients.
- Secured in such a way as to prevent removal of the unit and/or theft of contents.
 - In the case of electronic or Smart lockers: A method for pharmacy staff to be able to access the contents in the event of a power failure or malfunction.

PROCEDURES

A policy and procedure manual outlining the Prescription Locker process must be created and maintained. The manual must include:

- An outline of all steps involved.
- Notification template that will be sent to the patient (via email, phone message or text).
 - Notification must include clear instructions for how and when to pick up the order.
 - A procedure for loading the locker, including:
 - Documentation of pharmacy team member placing it in the unit and when that action occurred.
 - Steps to ensure accuracy of the loading process.
 - Considerations for security of contents and staff.
- A process to ensure verification of patient or their delegate at time of prescription pick up.
- A process for the recipient to confirm receipt of their order.
- A process for documentation (either physical or electronic) and subsequent retention of receipt for all orders picked up.³
- Compartment(s) size information, to aid pharmacy staff in decisions regarding bulky orders.
- A procedure for return or disposal of medications which are not picked up.
- A process to confirm the patient has received the order. This could include an electronic notification sent by the patient, or a member of the pharmacy team contacting the patient directly the next business day.

² <https://nbpharmacists.ca/legislation/practice-requirements/>

³ <https://nbpharmacists.ca/legislation/practice-requirements/>

PRIVACY

- In the case of Smart lockers, vendor software must have cybersecurity measures in place to protect patient information.
- Contents of locker must be sealed in a way that maintains patient privacy.
- Notification messages being sent to patients may not contain information which could identify the patient or refer to the contents in the locker.

EXCLUSIONS

- Orders to be placed in the Prescription Locker must not include the following:
 - Medications requiring cold chain management;
 - Orders requiring pharmacist education⁴ or pharmacist intervention;
 - Orders meeting other criteria as decided by the pharmacy team; and
 - Medications used in the treatment of Opioid Use Disorder, specifically excluding OAT.⁵
- Exclusion criteria must be clearly communicated to patients before using the system.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Measures are to be implemented to monitor any incidents, including near misses, errors which reach the patient, as well as privacy breaches related to use of the locker.
- Incident data produced is to be used as part of the pharmacy's overall Quality Management Program.

⁴ <https://nbpharmacists.ca/legislation/practice-requirements/>

⁵ <https://nbpharmacists.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/OAT-PracticeDirectiveJuly2022EN.pdf>