

## **COVID-19 Pharmacy Personnel/Exposure Guidance and possible temporary pharmacy closures**

While individual circumstances will vary, the following are examples of how to approach this COVID-19 pandemic. Use common sense steps to limit COVID-19 virus exposure in your pharmacies and to others. Please call the Board of Pharmacy for any specific questions or guidance at (605) 362-2737 or email [PharmacyBoard@state.sd.us](mailto:PharmacyBoard@state.sd.us). We will respond as soon as possible. Use your professional judgement and take care of the patients of South Dakota the best way that you possibly can!

### **What ALL pharmacies should do to plan ahead now:**

1. Encourage utilization of current drive-thru services or consider offering curbside delivery for pharmacy patients.
2. Assemble a list of potential relief pharmacists/techs and phone numbers, in case all staff at your location are affected by COVID-19 and unable to work. Solicit help from other pharmacies in your area, help other pharmacies where you can.
3. Ensure that Power of Attorney paperwork is in place for persons that work regularly and are familiar with the CII ordering process. Many pharmacies have 1 or 2 persons that can sign an order for CII medications. While it is not feasible to obtain CSOS ordering ability for everyone; the ability to order CII medications is important to pharmacies and patients. Please review policies and have persons with Power of Attorney able to sign DEA 222 Forms. Also, now is the time to check your supply of DEA 222 forms. You may need to place an order with the DEA for more 222 forms. If CSOS ordering is not available, the manual DEA 222 forms may need to be utilized in a worst-case scenario.

### **COVID-19 Exposure:**

- If for example: Pharmacy personnel (A) has a potential exposure to a patient with COVID-19 and exhibits respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore throat and a fever or temperature measured  $\geq 100.0$  °F), the exposed pharmacy personnel (A) should immediately self-isolate from others and coordinate a consultation with a healthcare provider for guidance and testing. The healthcare worker temperature cut point is  $\geq 100.0$ °F to determine fever. (It is imperative the healthcare provider is informed that the personnel to be tested is a pharmacy worker to obtain high priority for COVID-19 testing).
- Pharmacy personnel (A), is tested for COVID-19, and should follow the directions of the medical health professional for isolation/quarantine until test results for COVID-19 are confirmed. Link to CDC guidance on healthcare isolation: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assessment-hcp.html>
- Other staff members that had contact (worked within 6 feet of the COVID-19 tested Pharmacy personnel (A), should self-monitor themselves for fever by documenting their temperature daily prior to work, and be alert for respiratory symptoms and notify the Pharmacist-in-Charge of any changes in their health condition.
- If the test results for Pharmacy personnel (A) are **positive for COVID-19**, Pharmacy personnel (A) is now restricted from the work environment until cleared by a medical professional to return to work.
- Only those personnel that exhibit symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) should be tested.
- If ANY of the pharmacy personnel test Positive for COVID-19, the pharmacy should be closed for deep cleaning with an approved EPA registered disinfectant for use against SARS-CoV2. The EPA registration number can be found on the product label – look for the EPA Reg. No., there are several products listed and are ready-to-use (RTU) or dilutable. See CDC Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

**If the pharmacy does not have any other staff, the pharmacy may remain open; if the remaining staff that were exposed to COVID-19 have no symptoms are checking and documenting their temperatures daily prior to work and the pharmacy was thoroughly cleaned with an EPA registered cleaner/disinfectant.**

## Contingencies for Temporary Emergency (closing)/operation of a pharmacy:

### Retail:

1. No pharmacists available? **Inform the Board of Pharmacy**, and request emergency status for remote verification of dispensed prescriptions, (Filling less than 75 Rxs/day) Ideally, a pharmacist would connect remotely and be assigned a Virtual Personal Network (VPN) pharmacy workstation. The pharmacist must have access to clinical resources, to view, review, and counsel patients by phone.
2. No technicians available? **Inform the Board of Pharmacy**, and request emergency status for verified out-of-state Certified Pharmacy technician(s). Any Pharmacy Technician that is registered in another state and free from discipline, may work up to the end of the emergency declaration without registering in South Dakota. If any person working as a technician is not currently registered in any state, they must register within 30 days of starting work as a technician. SD Board of Pharmacy link:  
<https://sdbop.igovsolution.com/initial/initial/initial.aspx?id=63>
3. As a last resort, and **All** pharmacy personnel are affected by COVID-19, and no relief pharmacist or technicians are available, **inform the Board of Pharmacy**, notify the providers in the area, post a sign on all pharmacy doors with information of the pharmacy closing and the closest pharmacy that may be able to assist, close the pharmacy, lock all entrances set the alarm (if available). When the pharmacy is back open, please **inform the Board of Pharmacy** and providers that you are open and operational again.

### Telepharmacy:

1. The Certified Pharmacy Technician is unable to work due to COVID-19 exposure or a positive COVID-19 test result.
2. Have another Certified Pharmacy Technician from your organization, or other Pharmacy Technician that is trained on the pharmacy operating system and work processes, work at this location.
3. Have a Pharmacist within your organization or another available Pharmacist work from the Telepharmacy location.
4. Fill prescriptions from another Telepharmacy location or Central pharmacy and mail or deliver to the patient or use the Telepharmacy strictly as a drop site during the emergency period.
5. If, No Technicians or Pharmacists available? As a last resort, **Inform the Board of Pharmacy**, notify the providers in the area, post a sign on all pharmacy doors with information of the pharmacy closing, the phone number of the Central Pharmacy or another Telepharmacy where prescriptions may be filled and/or the closest pharmacy that may be able to assist, close the Telepharmacy, lock all doors set the alarm (if available). When the Telepharmacy is back open, please **inform the Board of Pharmacy** and providers that you are open and operational again.

### Hospital:

1. (Prior to an emergent situation) Critical Access Hospitals (<25 beds) - check into setting up your hospital pharmacy with remote order verification; if your hospital isn't currently utilizing this service. Link to Board application: <https://doh.sd.gov/boards/pharmacy/assets/Off-SiteAfterHoursHospital.pdf>
2. Pharmacist is unable to work due to COVID-19 exposure or a positive COVID-19 test result.
3. Solicit help from other area hospital pharmacists or pharmacists in your area.
4. **Inform the Board of Pharmacy** and request a temporary allowance for this Critical Access hospital pharmacy to operate as a Telepharmacy location.
5. No Certified Pharmacy Technician available? **Inform the Board of Pharmacy** and request current nursing staff to temporarily act in the place of a pharmacy technician.

COVID-19 information is changing daily be sure to check the SD COVID-19 site for the latest guidance, information and links @ <https://doh.sd.gov/news/coronavirus.aspx>

As with every scenario in protecting the patients of South Dakota please remember above all to use your professional judgment in your decision-making process.