MEMO

Date: April 19, 2020
To: Service Delivery Organization CEOs
From: Dr. Brent Roussin Chief Provincial Public Health Officer
       Lanette Siragusa Provincial Lead, Health System Integration & Quality
       Chief Nursing Officer, Shared Health
CC: Beth Beaupre, Provincial Lead, Health Workforce, Shared Health
Re: COVID-19 – Collection of Salbutamol and Ipratropium Inhalers

Like other jurisdictions, Manitoba’s supply of salbutamol and ipratropium inhalers is tenuous. In an effort to ensure sufficient supply as we continue our efforts to minimize administration via nebulization, and to ensure availability for the treatment of COVID-19 positive patients, we are exploring innovative ways to extend existing supply. This includes investigation of the possibility of disinfecting previously used inhalers for subsequent use.

As we determine the feasibility of disinfection for reuse, we would like to begin collecting used inhalers rather than continuing current practice of discarding them as pharmaceutical waste. **This applies to hospital-issued inhalers ONLY.** Site-specific processes for sequestering and collection of these inhalers by pharmacy staff will follow.

In the interim, nursing staff are asked to please refer to the following steps:

- Retain and sequester salbutamol and ipratropium inhalers. This applies to inhalers that are no longer needed for the patient for whom they have been dispensed.
- Inhalers can be placed in a ziplock bag or other suitable storage.
- Inhalers should be left intact; please do not separate the medication canister from the plastic inhaler sleeve.

Patients’ own inhalers should continue to be disposed of according to current site-based waste management processes.

**Inhalers dispensed to patients in COVID-19 isolation rooms or COVID-19 isolation wards should be disposed of. DO NOT retain these inhalers for collection.**

For patients continuing salbutamol or ipratropium therapy at transitions in care, please continue to send inhalers with patients who are either transferred to another unit or facility, or who are
going home at the time of discharge. This is important as supply of these medications is equally tenuous in community settings.

Thank you for your support.