

Express Scripts and COVID-19

Does the Express Scripts Pharmacy Home Delivery have adequate supply of potential COVID-19 therapies, like chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine? (updated March 30, 2020)

Although we are seeing increases in demand due to increases in 90-day fills and increased use of emergency access benefits, our supply remains stable for the vast majority of medications.

However, we are seeing surges in demand for medicines that treat COVID-19 related symptoms and conditions, such as pneumonia, and medicines that may be used for COVID-19 treatment. These include: Anti-malarial medications Chloroquine and Hydroxychloroquine, Azithromycin, Albuterol inhalers and Antiretroviral medications.

While manufacturers are ramping up supply as quickly as possible, we may see temporary shortages on these medications. We have implemented protective quantity limitations through both the PBM and the Express Scripts Pharmacy to ensure appropriate access and protect supply for members who currently rely on these therapies for their approved indications. These limits are consistent with emergency rules and board of pharmacy regulations. The limits apply to chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin, a protease inhibitor, and albuterol/albuterol inhalers.

Our pharmacists are monitoring these prescriptions to ensure appropriate use and compliance with emerging regulatory rules across several states mandating quantity limits for these therapies.

We also will review new and renewed prescriptions for these therapies that do not have a diagnosis code to support their valid use, and these prescriptions will be subject to days' supply limitations of the medications. Pharmacists will be performing a utilization review for all new and renewed prescriptions to ensure clinically-appropriate dispensing practices.

Express Scripts supports the appropriate prescribing and use of these medications to maintain supply for patients with true need.

Is Express Scripts concerned about stockpiling of potential COVID-19 therapies? (updated March 30, 2020)

We are seeing a surge in demand for medicines that treat COVID-19 related symptoms and conditions, such as pneumonia, and medicines that may be used as an off-label treatment. We have also seen increases in demand due to increases in 90-day fills and increased use of emergency access benefits. For the vast majority of medications, our supply remains stable but we may experience temporary shortages as manufacturers work to increase supply.

We are implementing efforts to protect supply of medicines that treat COVID-19 related symptoms and conditions, and medicines that may have potential off-label use to treat COVID-19. Express Scripts created anti-stockpiling limitations to manage the quantities dispensed at the Express Scripts Pharmacy, and in our network retail pharmacies, to discourage participation of stockpiling activities.

What steps is the Express Scripts Pharmacy taking regarding access to potential COVID-19 therapies? (added March 30, 2020)

The Express Scripts Pharmacy is balancing the clinical need to limit quantities of emerging COVID-19 therapies with appropriate access and quantities for patients with currently approved maintenance indications for these medications. At this time, our pharmacists are reviewing all new and renewed prescriptions for these therapies and may be limiting quantities for these medications consistent with emergency rules and board of pharmacy regulations.

In general: Patients with previous use of chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, Kaletra, and azithromycin who have a documented or inferred diagnosis for currently approved indications/ appropriate maintenance use will continue to receive prescribed quantities (unless restricted by state emergency limitations). Chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, and azithromycin prescriptions received at the Express Scripts Home Delivery Pharmacy will be reviewed by a pharmacist for the presence of a currently approved maintenance diagnosis. At the current time, the home delivery pharmacy is only filling prescriptions for these medications for approved maintenance indications.