

On March 5, 2020, Governor Hogan issued a State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 is a respiratory virus that can cause serious illness and death. Due to recent information circulated about possible ameliorative effects of certain drugs, the Board has been informed by pharmacists and patients regarding inappropriate and unethical prescribing by physicians for themselves, family members and friends of drugs such as Chloroquine, Hydroxychloroquine, Lopinavir-ritonavir, Ribavirin, Oseltamivir, Darunavir, and Azithromycin, and in high quantities to suggest hoarding or other similar stockpiling activities. These drugs are typically used to treat lupus, malaria, rheumatoid arthritis, HIV, and bacterial infections, but are purportedly being written as a prophylaxis for COVID-19 or to treat undiagnosed COVID-19 symptoms.

To date, there is no FDA-approved medication to treat or prevent COVID-19. Research is currently underway, but prescribers should be mindful that any evidence of effectiveness is scant and that there are known contraindications with the use of these medications.

Pharmacists are reminded of their right to refuse to fill prescriptions that, in the pharmacist's professional judgment, are not clinically appropriate. Health Occ., Sec. 12-501. Community pharmacists may utilize their professional judgment to ensure that prescription drugs are available for all patients, to include the use of partial fills, limited days' supply or other means to promote continuity of care for patients taking these medications for established, and approved, indications. Pharmacists should also exercise their professional judgment in determining whether there is a valid prescriber-patient relationship in assessing the legitimacy of any prescription.

Board of Physicians guidance: [https://www.mbp.state.md.us/forms/ALERT\\_RX.pdf](https://www.mbp.state.md.us/forms/ALERT_RX.pdf)