

June 17, 2020

Deputy Minister Lorna Rosen, Alberta
Deputy Minister Stephen Brown, British Columbia
Deputy Minister Karen Herd, Manitoba
Deputy Minister Gérald Richard, New Brunswick
Deputy Minister John Abbott, Newfoundland
Deputy Minister Bruce Cooper, Northwest Territories
Deputy Minister Kevin Orrell, Nova Scotia
Deputy Minister Ruby Brown, Nunavut
Deputy Minister Helen Angus, Ontario
Deputy Minister Mark Spidel, Prince Edward Island
Deputy Minister Max Hendricks, Saskatchewan
Deputy Minister Stephen Samis, Yukon

Dear Deputy Minister,

We are writing to you regarding the provincial rollout of the home delivery service for patients using plasma protein products (PPPs) and their alternatives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Network of Rare Blood Disorder Organizations (NRBDO) and some of its member groups first proposed the program in mid-March and the idea was quickly taken up by Héma-Québec, who launched a program with the province April 1st. We wrote to you on April 14, and in early May Canadian Blood Services (CBS) contracted a national pharmacy courier service at CBS expense. Hospital transfusion services could use the courier to deliver PPPs to patients at high risk of serious complications of COVID-19, and a comprehensive information package was provided to all jurisdictions. The National Emergency Blood Management Committee (NEBMC) announced the service in its May 13 Advisory. The actions taken by CBS and the NEBMC were very encouraging, and we would like to thank you for your assistance in the establishment of a national home delivery program.

The rollout of the program, however, has been extremely problematic. Jurisdictions have either refused to use the service or have delayed implementation. This has left high-risk patients with few options.

We encourage you to consider the immunodeficient patient who lives alone, without access to transport, who is currently sending a taxi driver with her health card to pick up her plasma product because she cannot access home delivery. Or, the over-65 immunocompromised patient whose blood bank is located on the same floor as the ICU, where the COVID-19 patients are being treated, whose blood bank told her to “ask a neighbour or a friend” to pick up her product, because they are not offering home delivery.

We realize that at this point in the pandemic, most hospitals feel that they have already accommodated for patients on home treatment. This is not the case. Some hospitals do provide curbside pickup and this is appreciated by many patients, though it is not feasible for all. Other hospitals have said that patients

can simply send a “delegate” in their place. It is our view, supported by many of our clinicians, that having a spouse or parent pick up PPPs in no way reduces the risk of serious COVID-19 complications in vulnerable patients, nor does it reduce the risk of causing COVID-19 infections and clusters among health care providers.

Hospitals have said that developing the standard procedures is too time-consuming. Perhaps this could be done once, for all jurisdictions. Finally, we have been told that transfusion services / blood banks don't have the time to run such a service. As they already supply these PPPs one patient at a time, we think there may be time savings in simultaneously preparing multiple packages for a single pickup by a courier service.

COVID-19 will unfortunately be with us for many months, if not years. To contribute to public health efforts to reduce COVID-19 transmission and to protect the most vulnerable patients, we respectfully ask you to ensure that home delivery of PPPs is available to all those who need it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Erin Harder', written in a cursive style.

Erin Harder

Chair

Network of Rare Blood Disorder Organizations (NRBDO)

Cc: Sylvain Grenier, Director – Plasma Protein Products Formulary Program, Canadian Blood Services
Dr. Oksana Prokopchuk-Gauk, Chair, National Emergency Blood Management Committee
PT/BLC members