

To: YNHHS Pharmacy and Nursing staff

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Subject: Use of patient's own medications during COVID-19

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**S:** Use of patient's own medications (POM) may potentially increase the risk of COVID-19 exposure to health care practitioners.

**B:** Use of POM entails use of a patient's own medication supply that is brought in from home for continuation of chronic therapy. Many times, these medications can be converted to a Formulary alternative or the medication can be held, as continuation of the chronic medication is not clinically needed while admitted. In addition, there are times when it is difficult for the pharmacy to identify the medication, along with ensuring the proper chain of custody when using a medication that was not obtained by the hospital pharmacy.

When the medication is brought in by the patient, who is a Patient Under Investigation (PUI), or COVID-19 positive, the nurse must handle the POM potentially increasing the risk of exposure to COVID-19. In addition, the medication must be re-labeled, further increasing the risk of exposure to COVID-19. When the COVID-19 positive patient takes their POM home, they can further increase the risk of exposure to family members.

**A:** Use of POM increases the risk of COVID-19 exposure to health care practitioners if continued in COVID-19 positive patients. However, regardless of COVID-19 status, POM SHOULD only be used when there are no Formulary alternatives AND the drug is clinically necessary for continuation AND it is not feasible for the hospital pharmacy to supply that medication. Please refer to the YNHHS Medications Brought into the Organization by Patients or their Families Policy, located on the Policy Manager section of the Health System's Intranet web site.

**R:** All POM should be evaluated for potential use of either Formulary alternatives or should be held during the patient's hospital admission IF continuation is not clinically needed, regardless of COVID-19 status.

If the pharmacist is NOT on site to perform the verification process/relabeling OR the patient is COVID19+ or PUI, the medication verification process will be completed with the bedside nurse and secure technology support, such as MHB where available.

Coordination with central pharmacy staff will be necessary to send the pharmacy label to the floor via the tube system or with a technician on the next delivery run to the floor, so that the nurse covering the patient can label the medication when she/he goes back into the room. The nurse should not send the POM to the pharmacy to re-label the medication.

If POM is used in a COVID-19 positive patient, before the patient is discharged, the medication container should be cleaned with either Super Sani-Cloth® disposable wipes or alcohol pads (70% isopropyl alcohol), and placed in a plastic bag for the patient to take home.