

PHARMACY *update*

National Edition

JULY 2019

UPDATE ON GSC'S VALUE-BASED PHARMACY INITIATIVE

In 2017 Green Shield Canada (GSC) launched the Value-based Pharmacy initiative with the goal of improving care for our plan members through collaboration with community pharmacies. Phases one and two of the initiative are now complete and live, and we're actively working on phase three.

To remind our readers, in phase one of the Value-based Pharmacy initiative, we started measuring pharmacy performance, assessing it against a set of validated metrics (created by pharmacists), and sharing that information with pharmacies. In phase two, we started calculating a star rating or overall score for each store, called the Pharmacy Quality Rating, which was made available to GSC plan members as an additional piece of information to consider when making a choice of pharmacy. Phase three will tie the Pharmacy Quality Rating to pharmacy reimbursement.

We continue to work with the pharmacy community – including the Canadian Pharmacists Association and the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada – to develop the reimbursement framework which will be implemented in July 2020. The working group has brought forward six recommendations of which four can be directly addressed, and we are currently working towards their implementation. The remaining two recommendations are still being investigated for implementation feasibility. In addition, individual pharmacies that have gained experience working directly with the EQuIPP platform have provided additional recommendations, some of which have already been implemented while others are actively under review.

There has been a fair amount of discussion in the pharmacy community about this next phase. We will reiterate that with the Value-based Pharmacy Initiative, GSC's goal is to minimize variation in pharmacy practice and improve quality of care across Canada; it's not designed as a cost containment initiative. It will be revenue neutral for the pharmacy industry and employers/plan sponsors. Through phase three's reimbursement framework, a pool will be created to redistribute reimbursement from lower-performing pharmacies to higher-performing ones; in this way, we will provide payment based on the level and quality of care provided. The new reimbursement structure will apply only to pharmacies that have earned a Pharmacy Quality Rating – about a third of all pharmacies in Canada – while pharmacies that don't qualify for an overall rating will not see any change in the structure of their reimbursement.

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