Community Pharmacy – Critical Staffing Concerns

Over at least the past month, the Board has been receiving complaints or other communications from pharmacists and members of the public concerning issues that appear to be due to inadequate staffing at chain pharmacies. Additionally, during inspections and investigations Pharmacy Surveyors are noting that staffing often appears to be grossly inadequate for the volume of work being performed by pharmacists and technicians. Additional information is found in a separate memo prepared by the Board’s Lead Surveyor, Michele Mattila.

Curbside delivery of prescriptions used to treat patients with COVID-19

On December 1, 2021, advisers to the US Food and Drug Administration voted 13-10 to recommend emergency use authorization of molnupiravir – an oral medication used to treat Covid-19. Whether and when the FDA may grant an emergency use authorization or other approval is not known. However, Board staff have received a couple of questions which require input from Board Members:

- Depending on the distribution system established by the FDA and the Minnesota Department of Health, molnupiravir prescriptions may be received by pharmacies. The patients will have had positive test for COVID-19. One question staff has received is – will the Board allow for curbside drop off and pick-up of molnupiravir prescriptions, in order to minimize the possible transmission of COVID?
- If molnupiravir is distributed to hospital pharmacies, will the Board allow them to dispense the drug even if they don’t normally dispense outpatient drugs.

Legislative Reports

The Board is required to annually submit two reports to the Legislature – the Obsolete Rules Report and the Controlled Substances Scheduling Report. The 2021 version of those reports were distributed to Board Members for this meeting. Staff asks for approval of the reports.

Proposed legislation

Staff requests input from the Board Members concerning two potential legislative bills related to:

- Products with drugs derived from hemp
- The Prescription Monitoring Program
Information about these two issues is provided in separate documents that were distributed to Board Members for this meeting.