

# INFOBulletin

Keeping health care providers informed of payment, policy or program changes

**To:** Prescribers with the Authority to Prescribe Controlled Drugs

**Published by:** Ontario Public Drug Programs

**Date Issued:** July 19, 2016

**Bulletin #:** 4675

**Re:** Important Notice Regarding Changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program Funding of Opioid Medications

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The purpose of this INFOBulletin is to inform you of the changes that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the ministry) will implement as a result of the review and recommendations issued by the Ministry's Pain Medication Formulary Review Subcommittee. These changes are based on extensive discussions with practicing pain specialists, addiction experts and other health care providers, and are designed to balance the appropriate use of opioid medications with patient care considerations and the growing problem of opioid addiction in Ontario.

Effective with the **January 2017 update** to the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Formulary/Comparative Drug Index, the following products will be delisted from the ODB Formulary:

- Higher strengths of long-acting opioids, including:
  - Morphine 200 mg tablets;
  - Hydromorphone 24 mg and 30 mg capsules;
  - Fentanyl 75 mcg/hr and 100 mcg/hr patches; and
- Meperidine 50 mg tablets.

This notice is being provided over 6 months in advance of the implementation date in order to inform patients who may be affected by these changes and allow for sufficient time for transition planning for these patients, where required.

We have developed a Questions & Answers document (attached) to facilitate an understanding of these changes. We encourage you to read this material in its entirety, and direct any remaining questions to [PublicDrugPrgrms.moh@ontario.ca](mailto:PublicDrugPrgrms.moh@ontario.ca)

Physicians should consult available resources for support in transitioning and/or tapering patients, where required. One such resource is the 2010 Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain, available at:

<http://nationalpaincentre.mcmaster.ca/opioid/documents.html>