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March 24, 2020

RE: Hydroxychloroquine and Chloroquine Supply Issues

Dear Healthcare Professional:

The Division of Professional Regulation has received a number of complaints regarding the improper and over prescribing of both hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prescribers are prescribing these medications for new patients to have on hand if they experience signs of infection.

**To date, there are no studies to prove efficacy or safety of these drugs to treat COVID-19 in a community setting.** The Food and Drug Administration has not approved these drugs to treat viral infections. This drug is used in very limited instances for very critically ill patients with COVID-19 in a clinical setting. The approved and most common uses for hydroxychloroquine in the United States are to manage the chronic diseases Lupus Erythematosus and Rheumatoid Arthritis.

As a result of the improper and over prescribing of hydroxychloroquine, shortages of the drug are being reported statewide. One Delaware health system has restricted the use of hydroxychloroquine to infectious disease patients only. A number of pharmacies have instituted similar restrictions. New prescriptions are being limited to a 14-day supply, unless the patient is previously established on the medication. Patients previously established on the medication are limited to a 30-day supply. This should ensure that patients with chronic disease can get their medication and ensure there is adequate drug available in the clinical setting to manage the critically ill.

The Division of Professional Regulation encourages prescribers, pharmacies, and pharmacists to adopt similar policies. **Please refrain from prescribing these drugs prophylactically for COVID-19 exposure.** We must ensure that patients with chronic disease can continue to manage their diseases and that the most critically ill get the medication they need.

Thank you for your dedication and selflessness during this stressful time.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey N. Christ, R.Ph., J.D.  
Director