

Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch (DPEB): Designated Direct-Acting Antiviral (DAA) Prescriber Status Information for Healthcare Professionals in Saskatchewan

PRESCRIBING DAAs IN SASKATCHEWAN

What are direct-acting antivirals (DAAs)?

- DAAs are medications used in combination to treat Hepatitis C.
- The following DAAs are listed on the Saskatchewan Drug Formulary:
 - Maviret (glecaprevir/pibrentasvir)
 - Epclusa (sofosbuvir/velpatasvir)
 - Sovaldi (sofosbuvir)
 - Vosevi (sofosbuvir/velpatasvir/voxilaprevir)
 - Harvoni (ledipasvir/sofosbuvir)

In addition to infectious diseases specialists, who can prescribe DAAs in Saskatchewan?

- In Saskatchewan, DAAs can be prescribed by licensed healthcare professionals who have the authority to prescribe medications.
- This includes: 1) medical doctors, including family physicians and specialists, 2) nurse practitioners, and 3) pharmacists who have collaborative prescribing agreements (or under prescriptive authority).

DESIGNATED DAA PRESCRIBER STATUS

What is the benefit of being recognized as a Designated DAA Prescriber by DPEB?

- Being recognized as a Designated DAA Prescriber facilitates more timely access to Exception Drug Status (EDS) coverage for patients that require DAA therapy.
- Effective May 1, 2024, all prescriptions for listed DAAs written by a Designated DAA prescriber (**for beneficiaries who meet the published EDS criteria**), will be automatically adjudicated at the dispensing pharmacy. Removing the requirement of an application reduces delays in treatment initiation.
- The sole purpose is to facilitate the adjudication of claims to the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan and reduce time to access DAA treatment. The purpose is **not** to confirm scope of practice or inform any type of monitoring.

If a patient is covered under Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), does the writer of the DAA prescription need to be a DPEB Designated DAA Prescriber?

- No, NIHB does not require the DAA prescriber to be a DPEB Designated DAA Prescriber for claim submission.
- For questions about NIHB DAA drug cost coverage, call NIHB at 1-800-580-0950 or go to: <https://nihb-ssna.express-scripts.ca/en/0205140506092019/16/160407>

Does a healthcare provider need to complete hepatitis C medical education or training to become recognized as a Designated DAA Prescriber by DPEB?

- Receiving medical education on prescribing DAAs for Hepatitis C is beneficial but not required for recognition as a Designated DAA Prescriber with DPEB. There is no designated course or educational curriculum that needs to be completed for DPEB to approve a prescriber's request to become a Designated DAA Prescriber.
- However, it is strongly recommended that new DAA prescribers complete some form of hepatitis C and DAA education.



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DESIGNATED DAA PRESCRIBER STATUS

What is the STBBI Treatment Education Program for Saskatchewan (STEPS), and how can it support healthcare professionals who are interested in learning how to prescribe DAAs?

- STEPS is administered by the University of Saskatchewan, through the College of Medicine's Division of Continuing Medical Education.
- STEPS offers free STBBI medical education opportunities to support DAA prescribers and healthcare professionals who provide Hepatitis C treatment. This includes accredited live webinars, access to recorded presentations, and coordination of 1-day Hepatitis C Clinical Preceptorship opportunities.
 - For more information, go to www.steps-sk.ca or contact STEPS@usask.ca.

How does a healthcare professional request to become recognized by DPEB as a Designated DAA Prescriber for Saskatchewan?

- **Option #1:** The healthcare professional sends an e-mail to DPEB and requests to become recognized as a Designated ARV Prescriber.
 - Requirements: The email must include a licensed Saskatchewan infectious diseases specialist to indicate the new prescriber is connected to an experienced DAA prescriber. A Designated DAA Prescriber Form, signed by the new prescriber, is submitted to DPEB.
 - Contact the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch at 306-787-8744, 1-800-667-7581, or DPEB@health.gov.sk.ca for more information or to request enrollment.
- **Option #2 (recommended):** The healthcare professional sends an e-mail to the STEPS program and requests to become recognized as a Designated DAA Prescriber.
 - STEPS coordinates the requirements (detailed in Option #1) and sends an e-mail to DPEB on behalf of the requesting new prescriber.
 - Go to: [How to Become Recognized as a Designated ARV and/or DAA Prescriber for Saskatchewan - Continuing Medical Education | University of Saskatchewan](#) for more information or to request enrollment.

What is the Designated DAA Prescriber Form required by DPEB?

- DPEB requires prescribers to complete the Designated DAA Prescriber Registration Form, which confirms that the prescriber is qualified and experienced in the management of hepatitis C or prescribing in consultation with a specialist in the area.
- **Note:** the DAA Prescriber Registration form is not available online; it is provided directly to healthcare professionals upon their request to become a Designated DAA Prescriber.

Is the list of Designated DAA Prescribers recognized by DPEB publicly available?

- No, this list is an internal document maintained by DPEB. It is not posted online or shared with external stakeholders.
- Healthcare professionals who are added to this list may be informed of upcoming hepatitis C and other related educational opportunities offered by STEPS.



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DAA DRUG COST COVERAGE FOR PATIENTS COVERED UNDER DPEB

Who is eligible for 100% drug coverage of DAAs through DPEB?

- An eligible patient must be a beneficiary under the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch (DPEBB). A beneficiary is a Saskatchewan resident with an active Health Services Number who is not covered under Workers Compensation, Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), Veterans Affairs, or the Canadian Armed Forces.
- DAAs are covered 100% through DPEB. There is no co-payment and there should be no charge to the patient (when EDS criteria are met and the DAA is prescribed by a Designated DAA Prescriber.)
- If an eligible patient is billed for their DAAs, please contact DPEB or the dispensing pharmacy to troubleshoot.

Where do I find DPEB's Exception Drug Status (EDS) criteria for DAAs?

- The Exception Drug Status (EDS) criteria, as listed in Appendix A can be found on the Saskatchewan Formulary website at: <https://formulary.drugplan.ehealthsask.ca/PDFs/APPENDIXA.pdf>

Are Designated DAA Prescribers required to submit an EDS application form for every patient covered under DPEB?

- Effective May 1, 2024, if a patient meets the EDS criteria, as outlined in Appendix A, a Designated DAA Prescriber is not required to submit an EDS application form to DPEB. These prescriptions will now be automatically adjudicated at the pharmacy, based on the DPEB Designated DAA Prescriber list.

What do I do if my patient covered under DPEB does not meet the EDS criteria for a DAA?

- If a patient does not meet the EDS criteria, a Designated DAA Prescriber **must** complete the **Medications for Hepatitis C Application Form**.
- For requests that do not meet the EDS criteria, EDS must be approved **prior** to the submission of a prescription claim to DPEB.

What do I do if my patient covered under DPEB requires DAA retreatment?

- Regardless of being a Designated DAA Prescriber, submission of a completed Medications for Hepatitis C Application Form is required for assessment of DAA retreatment requests.
- These may be considered by DPEB on a case-by-case basis.

Where can I find DPEB's Medications for Hepatitis C Application Form?

- This form is required when a patient does not meet EDS criteria for a DAA or if an assessment for retreatment is required.
- <https://formulary.drugplan.ehealthsask.ca/PDFs/Medications%20for%20Hepatitis%20C.pdf>

