



## Northern Health Palliative Care

### Palliative Symptom Management Kits (SMK)

#### DO

- Refer patient to community nursing and ensure they are registered with [BC Palliative Care Benefits](#) and [NH Palliative Care](#) Program
- Nurse: perform a home assessment prior to placing a SMK in the home and complete a correct count of SMK medication on next nursing visit and weekly thereafter
- Fill in patient identification on [SMK Medication Log](#) page 1 **and** 2 (or attach a patient label)
- Pharmacy: if all medication listed for the SMK is not dispensed (i.e., patient has an allergy to a medication) or full quantity not dispensed (i.e., supply shortage) make a note on the [SMK Medication Log](#) to communicate to nursing why there is a discrepancy
- Prescriber: write a prescription for medication to treat ongoing symptoms. The SMK contains approximately a 72-hour supply of medication for new or changing symptoms and any treatment beyond this period will require a prescription
- Prescriber: provide duplicate prescriptions for **both** opioids ordered in the SMK and deliver to the [designated pharmacy](#) (contracted to manage the NH SMK) within 72 hours

#### DO NOT

- Adjust the medication or quantity on the SMK Medication Prescription when ordering
- Replace medication in the SMK with patient's own medication. Once medication is prescribed to treat ongoing symptoms, it should be available to the patient outside of the kit
- Reveal the combination code for the SMK lock to the patient / family / caregivers / untrained staff
- Place a SMK in the home unless patient meets criteria (i.e., end of life, anticipating escalating symptoms and/or Palliative Performance Scale of 30%)
- Wait until there is a crisis before ordering a SMK. It takes time for paperwork to be filled out and to process and fill the medications in the kit. Expect a minimum turn-around time of 24 hours
- Access the SMK unless trained on using the service (i.e., completing the [LearningHub module](#) and/or education from a NH Palliative Care Nurse Consultant or the Palliative Care Pharmacist)

*If you have any questions, please contact the Northern Health Palliative Consultation Team at [Palliative.Care.Consult.Team@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Palliative.Care.Consult.Team@northernhealth.ca) or (p) 250-645-3791.*