



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joint Statement on Medication Safety During Treatment of COVID-19 in Utah

The Utah Pharmacy Association (UPhA) and the Utah Society of Health-System Pharmacists (USHP) appreciate the work of every frontline worker during the COVID-19 pandemic. We represent the interests of the pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy interns of the state of Utah who have joined the fight against the novel coronavirus each day. As health care providers, we strive to provide our patients with the safest treatment and care possible.

UPhA and USHP support using a medication when clinical research demonstrates it is both safe and effective. While we are anxious to find an effective treatment for COVID-19, we recommend treatment with unproven medications be reserved for patients under the close supervision of a multidisciplinary healthcare team. Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine are associated with serious adverse effects (i.e. fatal heart rhythms) that have the potential to actually cause harm. Thus, they should be prescribed with extreme precaution and careful monitoring by the multidisciplinary healthcare team.

Researchers at Intermountain Healthcare, University of Utah Health, and others have launched COVID-19 clinical trials in our state. We eagerly await the results from these clinical trials and stand ready to help dispense these medications if medical research shows they are safe and effective for this indication. We endorse a joint statement on this subject which was released on March 25, 2020 by the American Medical Association (AMA), American Pharmacists Association (APhA), and American Association of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP).

UPhA and USHP encourage all Utah pharmacists to continue to fulfill their important role as stewards of health care resources. Especially in times of emergency and national disasters, we stand together to promote the proven, safe, and effective use of these resources. We strongly oppose the practice of securing excessive amounts of any medication for the potential treatment and/or prevention of COVID-19, particularly hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine. Stockpiling these medications can have grave consequences for patients that are already dependent on them for the treatment of other serious conditions.

Furthermore, UPhA and USHP encourage adherence to existing federal regulations under section 503A of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act that prohibit the compounding of any commercially available drug product. These regulations ensure the quality and safety of each treatment we give in health care. We also support the recent dispensing guidelines for hydroxychloroquine issued by the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing and the Utah State Board of Pharmacy that states a prescription must only be dispensed when specific criteria are met for treatment of diagnosed COVID-19, along with other legitimate medical purposes. We caution that no medication has been FDA approved for use in COVID-19 patients.

It is important that patients feel confident in the care their pharmacist provides. UPhA and USHP will continue to support the prescribing and dispensing of medications to our patients that have been proven to be safe and effective through clinical trials for their intended medical purpose.

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