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JOINT STATEMENT OF THE BOARD OF OSTEOPATHIC LICENSURE AND THE BOARD OF LICENSURE IN MEDICINE ON PRESCRIBING CHLOROQUINE, HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE, AND AZITHROMYCIN

There have been reports nationally as well as in Maine that physicians or physician assistants are prescribing chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin to prevent or treat COVID-19, and they are prescribing these medications for themselves, family members, or for patients without symptoms or a COVID-19 diagnosis. Such activity may lead to stockpiling of medication, inappropriate use, and potential drug shortages for patients with a legitimate need for these medications.

During this coronavirus emergency, physicians and physician assistants must carefully follow established guidance and clinical evidence in making prescribing and treatment decisions. On March 28, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an Emergency Use Authorization for use of oral formulations of chloroquine phosphate and hydroxychloroquine sulfate to be prescribed by doctors for *hospitalized* adult and adolescent patients.

IN ORDER TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE MAINE PHYSICIANS AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS ARE REMINDED THAT:

Absent acute or emergency circumstances, prescribing for oneself or family members is considered unethical and unprofessional conduct. It may also violate applicable Board rules.

Prescribing chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, and azithromycin for prophylactic purposes in response to the COVID-19 outbreak may be considered unprofessional conduct, may negatively impact drug supplies impacting the health of existing patients who are established on these medications for treatment of their disease, and may lead to improper use which can cause patient harm.

Physicians and physician assistants are reminded to prescribe appropriately and to consider medication side effects, drug interactions, contraindications, and appropriate monitoring requirements (e.g. laboratory and cardiac testing). Meeting appropriate monitoring requirements for patients may be limited or restricted during this pandemic. You must exercise sound professional judgment and adhere to evidence-based standards of practice in making your prescribing and treatment decisions.

Effective: April 14, 2020