



Promoting the appropriate use,  
and reducing the abuse and misuse of monitored drugs in Nova Scotia.

## A Change to the Program's Duplicate Pad

### Pediatric Weights

Errors associated with medications are believed to be one of the most common types of medical errors<sup>1</sup> and are a significant cause of preventable adverse events.<sup>2</sup> Experts agree that medication errors have the potential to cause harm within the pediatric population at a higher rate than in the adult population.<sup>3</sup> Many children, especially very young children, cannot communicate effectively to providers regarding any adverse effects that medications may be causing.

Since patient weight is used to calculate most dosing and there is tremendous variation in normal weights for young children, all pediatric patients should be weighed in kilograms.

To serve as a reminder to prescribers and pharmacists, you will now see a new line on the duplicate pad for monitored drugs stating: "If appropriate, please indicate weight for pediatric patients."

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<sup>1</sup> 1. Institute of Medicine. *To err is human*; building a safer health system. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; 2000.

<sup>2</sup> 2. Bates DW. Medication errors. How common are they and what can be done to prevent them? *Drug Saf* 1996;15(5):303-10.

<sup>3</sup> 3. Phillips J, et al. Retrospective analysis of mortalities associated with medication errors. *Am J Health Syst Pharm* 2001;58(19):1835-41.