

Abortion pill now covered under student health plans at UPEI and Holland College

No orders of Mifegymiso have been shipped to P.E.I.

By Krystalle Ramlakhan, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 10, 2017 5:00 PM AT Last Updated: Feb 10, 2017 5:00 PM AT

The abortion drug Mifegymiso, also known as RU-486, is now covered under health plans for students at UPEI and Holland College through The Campus Trust — the schools' health plan provider, which provides coverage to 12 post-secondary institutions across Canada.

- [Abortion pill Mifegymiso months away from coming to Manitoba](#)
- ['Abortion pill' Mifegymiso slowly available in Canada](#)

In an email, Celopharma Inc., the drug's Canadian distributor, said no orders have been shipped to P.E.I.

Mifegymiso is a drug product that combines mifepristone to block the hormone progesterone and misoprostol to induce a miscarriage.

In Canada, the drug has been approved for use in the first seven weeks of pregnancy, although Celopharma has submitted a revised submission to Health Canada to extend that to nine weeks, as is allowed in other countries.

Health care provider approved drug last month

At the annual general meeting late last month, the board of trustees of The Campus Trust approved the addition of Mifegymiso to the prescription drugs formulary effective immediately, said Candice Heigh, chair of the communications committee for The Campus Trust in an email.

"The board's decision followed the same process as adding any other prescription drug to the formulary: the drug must be approved by Health Canada, be approved by the board's internal audit, and there must be discussion involving the trustees," wrote Heigh.

"The board also recognizes that there are stringent guidelines that must be observed to access any prescription drug, including being prescribed by a licensed physician."

Just over 1,500 students at Holland College and 2,350 at UPEI are covered under the various plans under The Campus Trust.

The amount covered depends on the schools' coverage. At UPEI prescriptions are covered at 90 per cent and at Holland College 80 per cent would be covered.

"The board was unbiased in its decision. The goal of The Campus Trust is, and will continue to be, to provide accessible health care coverage for students," continued the email.

There are just under 40,000 people covered on the various health plans under The Campus Trust across Canada.

"It certainly was great news to hear that the student health will cover the cost of the medication," said the

email from Celopharma.

Without coverage, mifegymiso costs about \$300 per person across Canada.

Approved in more than 60 countries

Health Canada approved Mifegymiso in July 2015, about 25 years after it was made available for women in France, and after a 2.5-year review. It is approved in more than 60 countries, including the United States, where it was approved in 2000.

'There has already been a great deal of interest in the program from HCPs all across the country, including Prince Edward Island.' — *Anne Trueman, SOGC*

So far, Mifegymiso has been shipped out to three clinics located in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario in early January.

Before it can be prescribed, physicians [have to complete training, which has been partially designed by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada.](#)

P.E.I. health professionals getting trained

The training for both doctors and pharmacists officially launched last month across Canada, said Anne Trueman, director of communications for the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) in an email.

- [Abortion pill approval: P.E.I. groups on both sides react](#)

There have been representatives from P.E.I. who have either completed the course or are registered at this time she said. The course can be completed within a day and there is no cap on how many can do the training at the same time.

"There has already been a great deal of interest in the program from [health care providers] all across the country, including Prince Edward Island," wrote Trueman.

Health Canada has [clarified how people can get the drug. On its website](#) it says as with any medication, a prescription for Mifegymiso can be filled by a pharmacist.

"Doctors are not required to order the medication themselves or stock it in their offices. The prescription can be filled by a pharmacist as with any other medication. It is simply delivered to the doctor's office instead of being picked up by the patient," reads the site.

Celopharma said Mifegymiso is available to ship across the country to every province, but not all provinces are prepared yet to receive the medication.

"There are such issues still to be worked out such as billing codes for some provinces, providers and pharmacists still to be trained," stated the email from Celopharma.

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