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Due to the urgency of impending drug shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic, conservation strategies are immediately needed to maintain supplies for those in most need. Both of these processes received P&T approval at NMH on 3/31. The hope is that these processes can be appropriately adapted across the system.

Antimicrobial Conservation: CAP Treatment for COVID-19 Positive Patients

Patients admitted for rule out or confirmed COVID-19 infection are often initiated on empiric antibiotics for the treatment of community-acquired pneumonia (CAP). The following is to be implemented to conserve drug supplies:

IV to Oral automatic switch therapy. Patients who meet P&T-approved criteria for oral therapy:

- Pharmacists are authorized to automatically switch the following:
 - IV azithromycin to azithromycin 250mg orally daily
 - IV ceftriaxone to amoxicillin 1g q8h **or** cefuroxime 500mg q12h
 - IV levofloxacin to oral levofloxacin for patients who have **severe penicillin allergies**.
- Once bacterial infection is ruled out, antibiotics should be discontinued. The Antimicrobial Stewardship Team will be routinely reviewing all COVID-19 positive patients and will assist care teams in ensuring discontinuation of antibiotics in these situations.
- The criteria identifying patients who qualify for IV to Oral switch are available at [NMH P&T Approved Criteria for Pharmacist Substitution to Oral Administration](#).

Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI) Conservation

Using MDI inhalers instead of nebulized doses in COVID-19 positive patients may reduce the risk of potential aerosolized virus particles during nebulization. Due to a national shortage of MDIs, the intent is to reserve MDIs for COVID-19 positive patients. For non-COVID-19 patients who need **inhaled, short-acting muscarinic or beta-agonists**, nebulized solutions should be used. If there is a clinical patient concern, please contact the COVID-19 ID team for consultation.

- Short-acting MDI inhalers (e.g., albuterol, ipratropium) should be conserved for COVID-19 positive patients or COVID-19 rule out patients due to the risk of nebulization.
- Short-acting inhalation solutions for nebulization should be used for non-COVID patients in order to conserve inhalers for COVID-19 positive patients and rule outs.