

# SEAFARERS' ACCESS TO LONG-TERM MEDICATIONS

The Covid-19 crisis has exposed the global seafaring community to numerous challenges.

Maritime employers and seafarers' unions, along with many other international organisations, are working relentlessly to ensure the work and dedication of our seafarers, to provide the world with essential products including food, medicine and fuels, is recognised.

Governments have been urged to recognise seafarers as key workers and to ease restrictions impacting on their ability to join or leave a ship, and to provide immediate medical assistance, when required. It is hoped that the situation will improve in the near future.

**Hundreds of thousands of seafarers have already exceeded or are in the process of exceeding the length of their tour of duty on board and this has negatively impacted seafarers' psychological and physical wellbeing. In addition, the extended period on board may have affected their ability to source and renew prescriptions for long-term medications.**

It is essential with the uncertainty and time needed to resolve the current crew change situation, seafarers should request, without delay, access to long-term medications that they require so that they can be purchased and delivered as essential items.

Legislation differs by country and it is not always possible to obtain certain types of medicine, to use repeat prescriptions or to validate electronic prescriptions, especially under the current restrictions. Therefore, seafarers who are running low of essential personal medications should:

- 1. Alert the ship's Master of the need to obtain a repeat prescription**, providing accurate detail on the medication required, including correct dosage to assist the ship's request to the port agent and provide information to the port authorities to obtain the medicine.
- 2. Where possible obtain an electronic prescription from your GP before arriving in a port or pass a hard copy of the prescription** (if available) to allow the port agent to verify if it is accepted as evidence to purchase the medicine.
- 3. Contact an ITF Inspector, seafarers' centre or mission to obtain information, delivery and purchase of medicines**, if privacy and confidentiality is required and they do not wish to notify the ship's management (please note that during the current restrictions, the activity of seafarers' centres and missions have been heavily restricted).
- 4. If possible, seek supply from their country of residence.** However, under the current restrictions, delivery may be affected by limitations and delays, and the ship sailing before delivery. Delivery of parcels containing prescriptions may also be subject to quarantine, depending on the applicable country and company policies on Covid-19 contagion prevention.

**SEAFARERS' HEALTH IS A PRIORITY, WHOEVER REQUIRES HELP TO PROCURE MEDICATIONS SHOULD ACT NOW.  
IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS OR NEED ADVICE, PLEASE CONTACT SEAFSUPPORT@ITF.ORG.UK OR WWW.SEAFARERHELP.ORG**

