

Florida Doctor Says CVS Pharmacy Refused COVID Patient's Prescribed Hydroxychloroquine

BY [EDDY RODRIGUEZ](#) ON 7/17/20 AT 4:07 PM EDT
[U.S. FLORIDA](#)

A Florida doctor said Thursday that a local CVS pharmacy refused to fill a hydroxychloroquine prescription for his coronavirus positive patient.

"When my assistant gave the COVID-19 diagnosis CVS said, 'Sorry we can't dispense the drug,'" Speros Hampilos, a Tampa Bay-area physician, told WFLA News Channel 8 after he sent his assistant to a St. Petersburg CVS pharmacy.

"This was the first time we've been asked for a diagnosis and were declined," the doctor said.

Hampilos, who has 35 years of experience, tried to fill the prescription after getting a phone call from a patient who just received news he was diagnosed with pneumonia and the novel coronavirus.

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"He called me yesterday and said, 'Doc, I was in the [emergency room]. I was diagnosed with pneumonia and COVID-19, and I still don't feel good,'" Hampilos said, which prompted him to write three prescriptions, including one for hydroxychloroquine.

Hampilos said he was told the reason why the CVS did not fill his prescription was because their policy dictated they could not dispense hydroxychloroquine for

a COVID-19 diagnosis. The doctor called a different pharmacy and was able to fill the prescription soon afterwards.

Amy Thibault, the senior manager for corporate communications at CVS, told *Newsweek* in an email the company's goal is to "limit stockpiling of medication that could result in future shortages and gaps in care."

"We're balancing the off-label use of certain prescription medications to treat COVID-19 pneumonia with the ongoing needs of patients who are prescribed these drugs to help manage chronic conditions such as lupus, HIV, rheumatoid arthritis and asthma," Thibault said.

"Our pharmacies are following dispensing guidelines regarding the use of these medications for COVID-19 that have been established in certain states. In states with no guidelines, our pharmacies are limiting the dispensing for COVID-19 treatment to a 10-day supply with no refills."

The Food and Drug Administration stated they revoked the emergency use authorization for hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine on June 15 following the results of clinical trials that found the drugs showed "no benefit for decreasing the likelihood of death or speeding recovery" in patients with COVID-19.

"This outcome was consistent with other new data, including those showing the suggested dosing for these medicines are unlikely to kill or inhibit the virus that causes COVID-19," the FDA stated on its website.

The FDA later released safety issues they found with the same two drugs in a July 1 report, stating serious heart rhythm problems were found in some people who took hydroxychloroquine when they had COVID-19.

