

Frauenfeld, 23 March 2020

Press release

COVID-19: Zur Rose is calling for an exception allowing the mail-orders for over-the-counter emergency, cold and flu medicines

The coronavirus is having a huge impact on public life and curtailing freedom of movement. In these circumstances, the mail-order business is becoming ever more important. In Switzerland, however, non-prescription medicines can only be delivered by mail when specifically allowed by a doctor. Zur Rose is therefore calling for an exemption to be granted, temporarily allowing non-prescription emergency, cold and flu medicines (over-the-counter medicines) to be sold by mail order. Online pharmacies can play an effective role in protecting the population right now, helping to curb the spread of the coronavirus and taking some of the pressure off bricks-and-mortar pharmacies and their exposed staff.

The request was submitted to Switzerland's Federal Office for Public Health and the Federal Council today.

In COVID-19 Directive 2, the Federal Council outlines measures for reducing the risk of transmission and for combating the coronavirus. The next few weeks will show whether the regulations and our behaviour as a society can help slow down the rapid spread of the virus we are currently witnessing in Switzerland. It is vital to ensure that Switzerland is able to supply its population with medicines and at the same time avoid any further spread of the virus. What people who are in quarantine and who are at risk need right now are simple, quick and reliable supplies, and online pharmacies such as Zur Rose can step in here.

Improve protection for everyone – by allowing mail orders for OTC medicines

Zur Rose has a special role to play in securing the vital supply of medicines in Switzerland under the federal government's medical continuity plan. Today it has written to the Federal Council and the Federal Office for Public Health (see <https://www.zurrosegroup.com/websites/zurrosegroup/German/2059/newsletter.html>), petitioning for the temporary right to deliver OTC emergency, cold and flu medicines by mail order. In specific terms, Zur Rose is requesting that, as long as the COVID-19 Directive is in force, prescriptions should not be required in the case of mail-orders for OTC preparations that treat flu or cold symptoms (preparations that are suitable for self-medication and that combat symptoms such as headaches, fever, diarrhoea, coughs, colds or nausea). Walter Oberhänkli, Executive Director and CEO Zur Rose Group, states, 'It makes no sense that sick people can have food and prescription medicines delivered to their homes but are forced to visit a pharmacy for urgently required OTC medicines that alleviate flu and cold symptoms.'

They are exposing themselves to the risk of infection with COVID-19 and potentially putting the health of pharmacy staff at risk as well.'

Highest safety standards – supporting the Federal Council's restrictions

Zur Rose takes numerous precautions when shipping drugs. Two pharmacists check each order before it is released for shipment. The customer identification procedure also prevents anyone from placing multiple orders when they should not. This is fundamental in view of the dispensing restrictions adopted by the Federal Council on 18 March 2020. It is in all of our interests to take some of the pressure off local pharmacies and chemists by (temporarily) approving the sale of OTC drugs by mail order. This will help the entire population, protect workers and contribute to our common goal of maintaining supplies while at the same time curbing the spread of the virus.

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Zur Rose Suisse AG

Zur Rose Suisse AG, a subsidiary of Zur Rose Group AG, is one of Switzerland's leading mail-order pharmacies and medical wholesalers. With its business model, it offers high-quality, safe and cost-effective pharmaceutical care and thus contributes to reducing healthcare costs. It is also characterized by the continuous further development of digital services in the field of drug management using AI-supported applications and new technology. Zur Rose Group is furthermore actively driving ahead its positioning as a comprehensive provider of healthcare services. By creating a digital healthcare platform – the Zur Rose ecosystem – it networks products and digital services from qualified providers. The contribution made by Zur Rose will be to take these offerings to customers and patients and to make a relevant selection. The aim is to provide people with a seamless accompaniment and empower them to manage their own health optimally using products and digital solutions. For further information please see zurrose.ch and zurrosegroup.com.