

# Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions®

An Independent Health  company

PHARMACY BENEFITS NEWSLETTER • VOLUME 14, ISSUE 3

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## Protect yourself this winter by getting a flu shot

Every year, between 5 to 20 percent of Americans come down with the flu. Most healthy people recover, but more than 100,000 people end up in the hospital from the illness and/or from flu-related complications. Nearly everyone can benefit from the flu vaccine, and people in these high-risk groups should be sure to get a shot:

- Children under age 5, but especially children under 2
- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Pregnant women (and women up to two weeks postpartum)
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- American Indians and Alaska Natives
- People who have medical conditions, including, but not limited to: asthma; heart disease; blood disorders; kidney disorders; liver disorders; metabolic disorders



It is important to get the flu vaccination every year because the virus may change from year to year. The annual vaccination includes the most commonly anticipated influenza viruses for the upcoming flu season. Your primary care doctor normally has a supply of the flu vaccine, but you can also get your flu shot at drugstores, community centers, your place of employment, and supermarkets.

### Getting your vaccination at the pharmacy

Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions (PBD) contracts with more than 62,000 pharmacies across the country, including major pharmacy chains such as Rite Aid, Walgreens, CVS and Walmart. Flu shots are administered at almost all major chains, as well as many independent pharmacies. Please remember to have your PBD member ID card if you are receiving your vaccine at your local pharmacy.

Looking for the pharmacy closest to you? Visit the PBD website at [www.pbdrx.com](http://www.pbdrx.com). Once there, click on "Find a Pharmacy," and search for the location closest to your home.

If you have questions regarding the flu vaccine or believe you may have the flu, contact your doctor.

## Tips for traveling with prescription drugs

If a business trip or vacation away from home is in your future, remember these helpful tips regarding your medication:

- Carry your medications in their original labeled containers, and pack them in your carry-on bag since checked baggage could be lost or delayed.
- Keep a list of your current medications, their dosages and how many times a day you take your medications with you in your wallet or in your purse. In case of an emergency, you will know what medications you are using.
- Keep copies of your prescriptions with you while you travel. If you have an emergency the pharmacy will be able to contact your provider for an emergency fill.
- If you are traveling to a different time zone, speak with your pharmacist about adjusting the times that you take your medications.
- Set an alert on your phone or your tablet to remind you that it is time to take your medications.

As a reminder, if you are having issues filling your prescription, your pharmacist can call our Pharmacy Help Desk at 1-800-993-9898, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This number is also located on the back of your pharmacy ID card.

Please direct questions or comments you have about the Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions newsletter to:

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## PBD clinical program spotlight – COPD & Asthma

At Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions (PBD), we have many clinical programs in place to help monitor for drug efficacy, safety and costs. In this issue, we will review our clinical program designed to help members with respiratory conditions such as Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD).

PBD performs Medication Therapy Management (MTM) for our Medicare Advantage plan members with prescription drug coverage. These members typically manage multiple medications for chronic respiratory conditions. The program is designed to help identify and prevent medication related problems, optimize the way members take their medications, and improve health outcomes.

### MTM consists of two types of medication reviews:

- 1. Comprehensive Medication Review:** A detailed one-on-one review between the MTM pharmacist and the patient or a caregiver. The conversation usually lasts about 15 to 20 minutes. If any issues are identified, our expert pharmacists will work with a member's prescriber to help find resolutions. After the review is completed, our pharmacist will mail the member an updated list of their medications and an action plan based on the member's individual review.
- 2. Targeted Medication Review:** All eligible MTM members receive quarterly targeted reviews. These reviews are based on claims data and look for specific common medication issues. The pharmacist may reach out to members for a brief conversation or may follow-up directly with the member's physician if issues are identified.

Additionally, PBD has worked tirelessly to secure several value-based contracts with drug manufacturers which hold manufacturers accountable for the efficacy of their medication.

One example of PBD's innovative contract agreements revolves around a COPD medication known as Stiolto® Respimat® (tiotropium bromide and olodaterol), which contains two medications used as maintenance treatment for patients with COPD. By leveraging readily accessible data, PBD can measure medication performance by identifying improvements in COPD for patients prescribed Stiolto Respimat.



By adequately controlling a patient's COPD with this inhaler, we hope to reduce the need for additional inhalers, as well as overall costs associated with treatment. Implementing and monitoring these agreements helps PBD add value for our members by ensuring everyone is receiving the right drug for the right price.

## Understanding prior authorization and step therapy

Certain drugs listed on the Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions (PBD) Drug Formulary may require prior authorization or step therapy. These drugs are indicated on the formulary with a "PAR" symbol for prior authorization or a "ST" symbol for step therapy. Both prior authorization and step therapy are ways to help our members get the best quality and value from their prescription drug benefit and ensure that they are using the correct medications to treat their condition.

### Why do we place prior authorization on a drug?

Prior authorization means that a member's health care provider will need to obtain prior approval before a prescription can be filled. We put prior authorization on a drug to make sure that you are receiving the right medication at the right time. Blood work or other labs may be required to make sure that the dosage is being prescribed appropriately.

For certain drugs, prior authorization will be required if the drug is not prescribed by a specialist who treats a certain disease or condition. This helps us to make sure that the drug is being administered with the same guidelines that a specialist would use. If prior authorization is needed for a drug, a provider will need to first submit a prior authorization form to us for our team of clinicians to review. A response is generally provided within 24 hours.

### Why do we place step therapy on a drug?

Step therapy means that an equally effective generic drug must be prescribed before we'll cover a more expensive brand name drug. For safety reasons, step therapy might be placed on a drug that is new to the market, which would require that a member first try a drug that has documented long term clinical results versus a drug that has only been on the market a short time. In addition, step therapy may also ensure that two drugs are used together if they are more effective in treating a certain condition when used in combination with each other.

If you have any questions regarding the PBD Drug Formulary, please contact our Member Servicing Department at (716) 635-7880 or toll free at 1-888-878-9172, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.