

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Health Care Finance



Office of the Senior Deputy Director-Medicaid Director

Transmittal # 20-16

TO: All DC Medicaid Providers

FROM: Melisa Byrd
Senior Deputy Director and State Medicaid Director

DATE: April 21, 2020

SUBJECT: **Temporary Pharmacy Program Changes Due to COVID-19**

The purpose of this transmittal is to notify Medicaid fee-for-service (FFS) prescribers and pharmacy providers of temporary pharmacy program changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the pendency of the Public Health Emergency (PHE) period¹. DHCF requested an 1135 Waiver from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on April 1, 2020. Under section 1135 of the Social Security Act, the HHS Secretary may temporarily waive or modify certain Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) requirements to ensure that sufficient health care items and services are available to meet the needs of individuals enrolled when the President declares a disaster or emergency and the Secretary declares a public health emergency. On April 3, 2020, CMS approved most of the flexibilities requested in the 1135 waiver. This transmittal describes the actions taken by DHCF to implement some of the flexibilities provided in the 1135 Waiver. To ensure that Medicaid FFS beneficiaries obtain necessary pharmacy services expeditiously, DHCF will implement the following pharmacy program changes during the extent of the COVID-19 pandemic:

Preferred Drug List (PDL) Update

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and reported drug shortages in certain sections of the metropolitan area,

- All covered NDCs of albuterol inhaler (brand and generic) are now included/listed as preferred on the Preferred Drug List
- All covered NDCs of albuterol solution and COPD inhalers are now included/listed as preferred on the Preferred Drug List

Updated signature requirements during the state of emergency

- DC Medicaid is modifying the beneficiary signature requirement for services provided during the Public Health Emergency

¹ The Public Health Emergency period, for purposes of the information contained in this Transmittal, is from March 1, 2020, through the termination of the PHE, as determined by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including any extensions.

- Beneficiary signatures are not required in cases where the provider has discontinued signature capture due to health concerns.
- Documentation of services provided to the beneficiary must be maintained by the provider indicating COVID-19 in the annotation

Implementation of a prior authorization process to override the following edits/limitations:

Please reference [Transmittal 20-11 COVID-19 Emergency Authorization Pharmacy Dispensing](#) for more information on early refills and 90-day supply.

- **Early Refill of a 30-day supply** upon beneficiary request
 - Use Early refill DUE code “ER” in NCPDP field: 439E-4
- **90-day supply of Maintenance Medications**
 - List of applicable maintenance medications available at <http://www.dc-pbm.com/>
 - Prescribers may write a prescription for up to a 90-day supply of maintenance medications

Other Prior Approval Actions

- 90-day extensions of existing Prior Approvals without additional documentation from prescriber
- Up to 90-day Prior Approval for newly prescribed covered medications without additional documentation from prescriber
- Prior Authorization is not required for non-opioids and Schedule III-V Controlled Substances
- Maximum daily unit edits still apply

Waiver of Beneficiary Co-payment

- The existing **Beneficiary Co-payment Waiver Process** is available for all FFS covered medications

Contact

If you have any questions or have any problems with obtaining medication after the changes go into effect, please contact the Division of Clinician, Pharmacy, and Acute Provider Services: Charlene Fairfax, Senior Pharmacist at (202) 442-9076 or e-mail: charlene.fairfax@dc.gov; Gidey Amare, Pharmacist at (202) 442-5952 or e-mail: gidey.amare@dc.gov; Jonas Terry, Pharmacist at (202) 478-1415 or e-mail: jonas.terry@dc.gov; or Magellan (Pharmacy Benefit Manager) at 1-800-273-4962 (Provider Phone Line).

Cc: DC Hospital Association
DC Primary Care Association
DC Health Care Association
DC Home Health Association
DC Behavioral Health Association

DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers
DC Medical Society