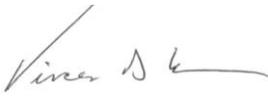




ISSUE DATE October 17, 2011	EFFECTIVE DATE October 17, 2011	NUMBER *See Below
SUBJECT Prior Authorization of Stimulants and Related Agents – Pharmacy Services		BY  Vincent D. Gordon, Deputy Secretary Office of Medical Assistance Programs

PURPOSE:

The purposes of this bulletin are to:

1. Inform providers that the Department of Public Welfare (Department) will require prior authorization of prescriptions for Stimulants and Related Agents when the MA recipient is prescribed more than one Stimulant and Related Agent within a 30 day period (therapeutic duplication), effective October 17, 2011.
2. Inform providers that the Department will require prior authorization of preferred and non-preferred Stimulants and Related Agents prescribed for a recipient 18 years of age and older; implementation will be phased in by age groups.
3. Issue updated handbook pages that include instructions on how to request prior authorization of prescriptions for Stimulants and Related Agents that require prior authorization, including the type of medical information needed to evaluate requests for medical necessity.

SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to all licensed pharmacies and prescribers enrolled in the Medical Assistance (MA) Program and providing services in the fee-for-service (FFS) delivery system, including pharmacy services to residents of long term care facilities.

BACKGROUND:

The Department’s Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Board meets semi-annually to review provider prescribing and dispensing practices for efficacy, safety, and quality and to recommend interventions for prescribers and pharmacists through the Department’s

*01-11-48	09-11-48	27-11-45	
02-11-42	11-11-42	30-11-42	
03-11-43	14-11-43	31-11-47	
08-11-49	24-11-49	32-11-42	33-11-10

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs Web site at
<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/provider/healthcaremedicalassistance/index.htm>

Prospective Drug Use Review (ProDUR) and Retrospective Drug Use Review (RetroDUR) programs.

DISCUSSION:

During the May 5, 2011 DUR Board meeting, the DUR Board recommended that the Department require prior authorization of Stimulants and Related Agents for MA recipients age 18 and older. There is widespread diversion and abuse that occurs with these medications. According to the Office of the National Drug Control Policy, Stimulants is one of the three classes of prescription drugs most commonly misused. Overdose of stimulants or stimulants used in combination with other adrenergic medications (such as cold medications and cocaine) can cause seizures, hyperthermia, arrhythmia, heart attack, stroke, psychosis, and even death.

The DUR Board recommended guidelines to determine medical necessity of Stimulants and related Agents when prescribed for MA recipients age 18 and older which were subject to public review and comment, and subsequently approved for implementation by the Department. The Department is phasing in implementation of prior authorization of Stimulants and Related Agents by age groups as follows:

1. October 17, 2011 for MA recipients age 18 to 27
2. November 14, 2011 for MA recipients age 27 and older.

The requirements for prior authorization and clinical review guidelines to determine the medical necessity of Stimulants and related Agents when prescribed for MA recipients age 18 and older are included in the attached updated provider handbook pages.

The DUR Board previously identified a potential risk to a patient's health and safety if the patient is taking more than one drug within the same therapeutic class and recommended that the Department require prior authorization of prescriptions that represent duplicate therapy. The Board recommended that the requirement for prior authorization of duplicate therapy apply to all age groups. The Department agreed with the DUR Board's recommendations and the requirement for prior authorization of therapeutic duplication. Therapeutic duplication occurs when the MA recipient is taking more than one medication within the same therapeutic class. PROMISE, the Department's on-line claims adjudication system, will determine if there is a record of a recent paid claim for another drug within the same therapeutic class of drugs as the new claim to determine duplicate therapy. The Department is phasing in the implementation of the requirement for prior authorization of duplicate therapy by classes of drugs. This requirement for Stimulants and related Agent will be implemented on October 17, 2011 for all age groups.

The DUR Board also recommended guidelines to determine medical necessity of duplicate therapy which were subject to public review and comment, and subsequently approved for implementation by the Department. The requirements for prior authorization and clinical review guidelines to determine the medical necessity of more than one drug within the same therapeutic class are included in the attached updated provider handbook pages.

The Department recognizes that therapeutic duplication can occur during therapy titration. PROMISE has been programmed to recognize dose titration associated with initiation

of therapy based upon the MA recipient's paid claims history so that MA recipients can receive their medications without prior authorization during transition periods.

PROCEDURE:

The procedures for prescribers to request prior authorization of Stimulants and Related Agents are located in SECTION I of the Prior Authorization of Pharmaceutical Services Handbook. The Department will take into account the elements specified in the clinical review guidelines (which are included in the provider handbook pages in the SECTION II chapter related to Stimulants and Related Agents) in reviewing the prior authorization request to determine medical necessity.

As set forth in 55 Pa. Code § 1101.67(a), the procedures described in the handbook pages must be followed to ensure appropriate and timely processing of prior authorization requests for drugs that require prior authorization.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Prior Authorization of Pharmaceutical Services Handbook - Updated pages](#)

SECTION II
Stimulants and Related Agents