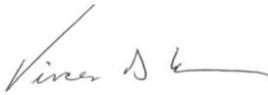




<b>ISSUE DATE</b>  January 26, 2012	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>  February 13, 2012	<b>NUMBER</b>  *See below	
<b>SUBJECT</b>  Prior Authorization of Antihistamines, Minimally Sedating – Pharmacy Services		<b>BY</b>   Vincent D. Gordon, Deputy Secretary Office of Medical Assistance Programs	

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this bulletin is to issue updated handbook pages that include instructions on how to request prior authorization of prescriptions for Antihistamines, Minimally Sedating 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 of Public Welfare’s (Department) Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee meets semi-annually to review published peer-reviewed clinical literature and make recommendations relating to new drugs in therapeutic classes already included in the Preferred Drug List (PDL), changes in the status of drugs on the PDL from preferred to non-preferred and non-preferred to preferred, new quantity limits, and new classes of drugs to be added to or deleted from the PDL. The P&T Committee also recommends new guidelines or modifications to existing guidelines to evaluate requests for prior authorization of prescriptions for medical necessity.

*01-12-03	09-12-03	27-12-03	33-12-03
02-12-03	11-12-03	30-12-03	
03-12-03	14-12-03	31-12-03	
08-12-03	24-12-03	32-12-03	

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The appropriate toll free number for your provider type

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

**DISCUSSION:**

During the November 9, 2011 P&T Committee meeting, the P&T Committee recommended edits to the clinical review process. If the guidelines to determine medical necessity of a non-preferred Minimally Sedating Antihistamine are met, the reviewer will prior authorize a prescription for the least costly, therapeutically equivalent non-preferred Minimally Sedating Antihistamine. The recommended change to the clinical review process was 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 Antihistamines, Minimally Sedating are included in the attached updated provider handbook pages.

**PROCEDURE:**

The procedures for prescribers to request prior authorization of Antihistamines, Minimally Sedation 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 Antihistamines, Minimally Sedating) 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  
Antihistamines, Minimally Sedating