



Notes from the pharmacist:

PHARMACY UTILIZATION MANAGEMENT

Q4 2019 Updates

THE RIGHT DRUG AT THE RIGHT PRICE

To ensure optimal, cost-effective outcomes that maintain quality of care, we regularly analyze drug trends and utilization. Together, the pharmacists at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and our pharmacy benefit manager, Prime Therapeutics, use that data to shape utilization management (UM) programs. This update reflects changes in programs based on that analysis.¹

To get the most current program updates, visit the [Pharmacy Utilization Management web page](#).



Prior Authorization – Ensures appropriate use of drugs by requiring pre-approval to verify appropriate prescribing.



Quantity Limits – Restricts the amount of drugs that a member may receive during a prescribing period. Limits promote safe, cost-effective drug use reducing waste and overuse.






Step Therapy – Requires members to try a safe, more clinically effective, and in some cases less expensive drug, before they are approved for a more expensive drug.

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2019






New Programs

UM program, therapy class or medication descriptions are included below, along with the specific medications targeted by these new UM programs. Please see the corresponding symbol for the type of UM program that applies.

Description	Target Drug	Program Type
Hemophilia Extended Half Life Products – factor products that work longer so they can be injected less often. Hemophilia is a disorder where blood does not clot normally and is treated by medication referred to as factor.	Adynovate, Afstyly, Alprolix, Eloctate, Idelvion, Jivi, Rebinyn	 
Antifungal Agents – medications that treat infections caused by fungus	Cresemba, Noxafil, posaconazole, Vfend, voriconazole	















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Riluzole – also called Tiglutik, a medication used to treat amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a nervous system disease that that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord	Tiglutik	 
Vascepa – used in addition to diet to reduce high levels of triglycerides, a type of fat found in your blood	Vascepa	 
Alinia – treats diarrhea caused by a parasite infection	Alinia	

Changes to Existing UM Programs

UM programs are updated on an ongoing basis to add new generics for targeted brand medications or new medications when they become available. The specific program additions are noted in the table below.

Description	Target Drug	Program Type
Amifampridine – a medication that treats rare muscle diseases. Brand names include Firdapse and Ruzurgi.	Ruzurgi	 
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – a brain disorder that results in inattentiveness or hyperactivity	Evkeo, Adhansia XR	
Constipation Agents – laxatives that treat and prevent constipation	Zelnorm	
Fibromyalgia Agents – medicines used to treat neuropathic pain, fibromyalgia, and generalized anxiety disorder	pregabalin (new generic for Lyrica)	
HSDD – hypoactive sexual desire disorder (HSDD), a sexual dysfunction disorder	Vyleesi	 
Insomnia – problems with falling and/or staying asleep	ramelteon (new generic for Rozerem)	
Multiple Sclerosis – a disease in which the immune system eats away at the protective covering of nerves	Mavenclad	 
Self-administered Oncology Agents – a group of medicines to treat cancer that are a tablet or capsule form and can be taken by mouth	Nubeqa, Piqray, Turalio, Xpovio	 
Statins – medications that treat high cholesterol	Ezallor	 

Discontinuation of UM Programs



Topical Estrogens – applied to the skin, used to treat certain symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes, vaginal dryness, burning and irritation	Alora Transdermal Patch, Minivelle Transdermal Patch, Vivelle DOT Transdermal Patch, Climara Transdermal Patch, Divigel Gel, Climara Pro,	
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	Elestrin Pump, estradiol transdermal patch, Estring Estrogel Gel, Evamist Spray, Femring, Imvexxy, Menostar	
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EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 1, 2019

New Programs

UM program, therapy class or medication descriptions are included below, along with the specific medications targeted by these new UM programs. Please see the corresponding symbol for the type of UM program that applies.

Description	Target Drug	Program Type
Egrifta – a medication that reduces excess fat in the stomach area of HIV patients	Egrifta	 



Notes from the pharmacist:

PHARMACY UTILIZATION MANAGEMENT

Q3 2019 Updates

THE RIGHT DRUG AT THE RIGHT PRICE

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Prior Authorization – Ensures appropriate use of drugs by requiring pre-approval to verify appropriate prescribing.







Quantity Limits – Restricts the amount of drugs that a member may receive during a prescribing period. Limits promote safe, cost-effective drug use reducing waste and overuse.

Step Therapy – Requires members to try a safe, more clinically effective, and in some cases less expensive drug, before they are approved for a more expensive drug.

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2019











New Programs

UM program, therapy class or medication descriptions are included below, along with the specific medications targeted by these new UM programs. Please see the corresponding symbol for the type of UM program that applies.

Description	Target Drug	Program Type
Arikayce – treats a lung infection caused by Mycobacterium avium complex (MAC), a group of bacteria	Arikayce	 
Firdapse – treats Lambert-Eaton myasthenic syndrome (LEMS) in adults, a rare immune disease that causes muscle weakness	Firdapse	 
Hereditary Transthyretin-Mediated (hATTR) Amyloidosis – an inherited disease that often affects the nerves, heart and kidneys as a result of a deposit of an abnormal protein called amyloid	Onpattro, Tegsedi	 


















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<p>Methotrexate Injection – treats rheumatoid arthritis and psoriasis</p>	<p>Otrexup, Rasuvo</p>	
<p>Nucala – treats asthma</p>	<p>Nucala</p>	
<p>Opioids (immediate release agents) – short-acting central nervous system pain medicines; updated program to manage a 7-day supply for members who are new to therapy</p>	<p>See below*</p>	
<p>Oxervate – treats neurotrophic keratitis, a rare disease affecting the cornea of the eye</p>	<p>Oxervate</p>	 
<p>Somatostatin Analogs – medications that stop your body from making too many hormones</p>	<p>Sandostatin, Sandostatin LAR, Somatuline, Somavert</p>	 
<p>Topical Estrogens – applied to the skin, used to treat certain symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes, vaginal dryness, burning and irritation</p>	<p>Alora Transdermal Patch, Minivelle Transdermal Patch, Vivelle DOT Transdermal Patch, Climara Transdermal Patch, Divigel Gel, Climara Pro, Elestrin Pump, estradiol transdermal patch, Estring Estrogel Gel, Evamist Spray, Femring, Invexxy, Menostar</p>	
<p>Topical Corticosteroids – synthetic (man-made) corticosteroid medications, used to treat skin conditions such as rash, dermatitis, itching, eczema and psoriasis</p>	<p>Brand and generic versions of: aclometasone, betamethasone, clobetasol, desoximetasone, flurandrenolide, fluticasone, fluocinolone, halobetasol, prednicarbate, desonide, diflorasone, hydrocortisone, mometasone and triamcinolone</p>	  <p>Brand + Generic</p>

Changes to Existing UM Programs

UM programs are updated on an ongoing basis to add new generics for targeted brand medications or new medications when they become available. The specific program additions are noted in the table below.

Description	Target Drug	Program Type
Angiotensin II receptor blockers and renin inhibitors – treat high blood pressure	aliskiren (new generic for Tekturna)	
Antiretroviral Agents – a group of medications that can prevent the growth of a virus	Dovato	
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – a brain disorder that results in inattentiveness or hyperactivity	Jornay PM	
Biologic Immunomodulators – medications used to treat conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis	Skyrizi	 
Buprenorphine – treats pain as well as addiction to narcotic pain relievers	buprenorphine-naloxone (new generic for Suboxone)	
Constipation Agents – laxatives that treat and prevent constipation	Motegrity	
Oral Inhalers – a medication delivery system to provide respiratory medications in an aerosol form that is inhaled through the mouth	fluticasone-salmeterol inhaler (new generic for Advair Diskus)	
Oral NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) – medications taken by mouth to reduce pain, fever and inflammation	Qmilz	
Pain Medications – medications used to treat or reduce the symptoms of pain	Apadaz	
Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension – a type of high blood pressure that affects arteries in the lungs and in the heart	ambrisentan (new generic for Letairis), bosentan (new generic for Tracleer)	 
Self-administered Oncology Agents – a group of medicines to treat cancer that are a tablet or capsule form and can be taken by mouth	Balversa, erlotinib (new generic for Tarceva)	 
Sensipar – can lower the amount of calcium in the blood	cinacalcet (new generic for Sensipar)	
Urinary Incontinence Agents – treat symptoms of an overactive bladder	solifenasin (new generic for Vesicare)	 

* acetaminophen/caffeine/dihydrocodeine, acetaminophen/codeine solution, Apadaz, butalbital/acetaminophen/caffeine/codeine, butorphanol tartrate nasal solution, codeine sulfate, Demerol, meperidine, Dilaudid, hydromorphone, Dolophine, methadone, Dvorah, Fioricet w/Codeine, Fiorinal, butalbital/aspirin/caffeine, hydrocodone/acetaminophen, hydrocodone/ibuprofen, ibudone, lovorphanol, Lortab, morphine sulfate, Nalocet, Norco, Nucynta, Opana, oxymorphone, Oxaydo, oxycodone, oxycodone/aspirin, oxycodone/ibuprofen, panlor, pentazocine/naloxone, Percocet, Primlev, Reprexain, Roxicodone, Roxybond, Synalgos DC, Trezix, Tylenol w/Codeine, Ultracet, tramadol/acetaminophen, Ultram, tramadol, Xodol



Notes from the pharmacist:

PHARMACY UTILIZATION MANAGEMENT

Q2 2019 Updates

THE RIGHT DRUG AT THE RIGHT PRICE







To ensure optimal, cost-effective outcomes that maintain quality of care, we regularly analyze drug trends and utilization. Together, the pharmacists at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and our pharmacy benefit manager, Prime Therapeutics, use that data to shape utilization management (UM) programs. This update reflects changes in programs based on that analysis.¹

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EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2019

New Programs

UM program, therapy class or medication descriptions are included below, along with the specific medications targeted by these new UM programs. Please see the corresponding symbol for the type of UM program that applies.

Description	Target Drug	Program Type
Orilissa – treats mild to moderate endometriosis pain	Orilissa	 
Carafate (sucralfate) – treats ulcers	Carafate Suspension, sucralfate suspension	 
Galafold – treats Fabry disease, a rare genetic disorder	Galafold	 

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Prior Authorization – Ensures appropriate use of drugs by requiring pre-approval to verify appropriate prescribing.
























Quantity Limits – Restricts the amount of drugs that a member may receive during a prescribing period. Limits promote safe, cost-effective drug use reducing waste and overuse.






Step Therapy – Requires members to try a safe, more clinically effective, and in some cases less expensive drug, before they are approved for a more expensive drug.


Changes to Existing UM Programs

UM programs are updated on an ongoing basis to add new generics for targeted brand medications or new medications when they become available. The specific program additions are noted in the table below.

Description	Target Drug	Program Type
Androgens and Anabolic Steroids – substances related to male sex hormones	testosterone gel (new generic for Fortesta)	 
Anticoagulants – blood thinners	Xarelto 2.5 mg	
Antifungals – medications that are used to treat fungal infections of the fingernail or toenail	Tolsura	 
Anti-influenza medications – antiviral medications for the prevention and treatment of influenza	Xofluza	
Atopic Dermatitis Agents – medications used to treat eczema, a type of inflammation of the skin. It results in itchy, red, swollen, and cracked skin.	pimecrolimus cream (new generic for Elidel)	
Atypical Antipsychotic Agents – group of antipsychotic medications used to treat psychiatric conditions	Abilify Mycite	 
Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) – age-associated prostate gland enlargement that can cause urination difficulty	Silodosin (new generic for Rapaflo)	
Erectile Dysfunction – impotence	ildenafil tablet (new generic for Levitra and Staxyn)	
Hepatitis C – an infection caused by a virus that attacks the liver and leads to inflammation	ledipasvir/sofosbuvir (new authorized generic for Harvoni) and sofosbuvir/velpatasvir (new authorized generic for Epclusa)	
Nocturia – the complaint of needing to get up numerous times during the night to void	Nocdurna	 
Ophthalmic Immunomodulators – medicines used to treat dry eyes	Cequa	 
Ophthalmic Prostaglandins – medicine used to reduce pressure in the eye for people with glaucoma	Xelpros	
Opioids (extended release agents) – long-acting central nervous system pain medicines	buprenorphine (new generic for Butrans)	 
Self-administered Oncology Agents – group of medicines to treat cancer that are a tablet or capsule form and can be taken by mouth	Daurismo, Lorbrena, Talzena, Vitrakvi, Vizimpro, Xospata and abiraterone (new generic for Zytiga 250 mg)	 

Tetracycline antibiotics – medications that are used to treat bacterial infections	Sysara	
Thrombocytopenia – deficiency of platelets in the blood, in adult patients with chronic liver disease prior to a procedure	Promacta oral suspension	 



Discontinuation of UM Programs

Description	Target Drug	Program Type
Combination Gastrointestinal Protectants – combination medications that treat pain and provide relief of stomach upset or ulcer	Duexis, Vimovo, Yosprala	

EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2019

New Programs

UM program, therapy class or medication descriptions are included below, along with the specific medications targeted by these new UM programs. Please see the corresponding symbol for the type of UM program that applies.

Description	Target Drug	Program Type
Gonadotropin Hormones – hormones secreted by the pituitary which stimulate the activity of the gonads	Bravelle, Follistim AQ, Gonal-F, Novarel, Ovidrel, Pregnyl, Cetrotide, Ganirelix, Menopur	 



Notes from the pharmacist:

PHARMACY UTILIZATION MANAGEMENT Q1 2019 Updates

THE RIGHT DRUG AT THE RIGHT PRICE

To ensure optimal, cost-effective outcomes that maintain quality of care, we regularly analyze drug trends and utilization. Together, the pharmacists at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and our pharmacy benefit manager, Prime Therapeutics, use that data to shape utilization management programs. This update reflects changes in programs based on that analysis.

Utilization Management includes:

Prior Authorizations – Ensures appropriate use of drugs by requiring pre-approval to verify appropriate prescribing.

Quantity Limits – Restricts the amount of drugs that a member may receive during a prescribing period. Limits promote safe, cost-effective drug use. They also help reduce waste and overuse.

Step Therapy – Requires members to try a safe, more clinically effective and in some cases less expensive drugs, before they are approved for a more expensive drug.

The following are recent changes to the programs.¹

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2019

New Programs

Lucemyra – a medication that manages the symptoms of opioid withdrawal after abrupt discontinuation in adults.

- ➔ Prior Authorization – to ensure safe and appropriate use
- ➔ Quantity Limits – to manage appropriate quantities and dose

Pseudobulbar Affect – inappropriate involuntary laughing and crying due to a nervous system disorder.

- ➔ Prior Authorization – to ensure appropriate use of Nudexta
- ➔ Quantity limits – to manage appropriate quantities and dose of Nudexta

Topiramate Extended Release (ER) – a medication that is used to treat seizure disorders.

- ➔ Prior Authorization – to ensure safe and appropriate use of Trokendi XR and Qudexy XR
- ➔ Quantity Limits – to manage appropriate quantities and dose of Trokendi XR and Qudexy XR

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may not implement these programs or provide coverage for certain medicines or services addressed in these programs.

Changes to Utilization Management Programs

Antiretroviral Agents – a group of medications that can prevent the growth of a virus.

- Quantity Limits – to target Delstrigo, Pifeltro, Symtuza and nevirapine (new generic for Viramune)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – a brain disorder that results in inattentiveness or hyperactivity.

- Quantity Limits – to target amphetamine tablet (new generic for Evekeo)

Atypical Antipsychotic Agents – a group of antipsychotic medications used to treat psychiatric conditions.

- Step Therapy – to target Perseris
- Quantity Limits – to manage safe and appropriate use of Perseris

Doxycycline & Minocycline – antibiotics that are used to treat bacterial infections.

- Prior Authorization – for use of Minolira ER
- Quantity Limits – to target Minolira ER

Migraine – a headache of varying intensity, often accompanied by nausea and sensitivity to light and sound.

- Prior Authorization – for use of Ajovy
- Quantity Limits – to target Ajovy

Mulpleta – used to treat thrombocytopenia, a deficiency of platelets in the blood, in adult patients with chronic liver disease prior to a procedure.

- Prior Authorization – for use of Mulpleta
- Quantity Limits – to target Mulpleta

Multiple Sclerosis – a disease in which the immune system eats away at the protective covering of nerves.

- Prior Authorization – for use of dalfampridine (new generic for Amypra)
- Quantity Limits – to target dalfampridine (new generic for Amypra)

Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension – a type of high blood pressure that affects arteries in the lungs and in the heart.

- Prior Authorization – for use of tadalafil (new generic for Adcirca)
- Quantity Limits – to target tadalafil (new generic for Adcirca)

Self-administered Oncology Agents – a group of medicines to treat cancer that are a tablet or capsule form and can be taken by mouth.

- Prior Authorization – for use of Copiktra and Tibsovo
- Quantity Limits – to target Copiktra and Tibsovo

Topical lidocaine – medication that is used on the skin to reduce pain or discomfort caused by skin irritations or nerve pain.

- Prior Authorization – for use of ZTLido Pad
- Quantity Limits – to target ZTLido Pad

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