

Benefits Bulletin

Information Update for Group Benefits Plan Sponsors and Plan Advisors

MANULIFE EXPANDS PRIOR AUTHORIZATION DRUG LIST IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

At Manulife Financial, we're constantly assessing our group benefits programs to help ensure we are delivering the best value and service to our plan sponsors and plan members. To that end, we're currently exploring opportunities to further integrate drug claims with coverage that may be available through government-funded, special application programs such as the British Columbia Special Authority Drug program.

Exploring the potential

To better understand the utilization of such programs by our plan members and the potential effect on claims, we've recently expanded our Prior Authorization drug list in British Columbia to include a selection of higher-cost drugs currently included under the province's Special Authority Drug program. These additions to the Prior Authorization drug list apply only in British Columbia (BC).

In the end, our experience with select BC Special Authority drugs will help us to determine if the process should continue, be expanded or how we may further enhance our processes so that we can continue to help our plan sponsors and plan members get the most value from their Group Benefits plans.

New process for BC Special Authority Drugs

The Prior Authorization process for BC Special Authority drugs included on our expanded drug list requires that plan members complete the application process and provide a copy of the approval / decline letter from the BC Special Authority Drug program before claims for the drugs can be reimbursed under their plan.

(cont'd)



About the British Columbia Special Authority Drug Program:

In British Columbia (BC), the province has identified certain drugs under the Special Authority Drug program that may be covered by the public plan if the plan member meets the program's established criteria.

The criteria for approval varies for each drug included under the program and involves a special application process outside of the usual Fair Pharmacare plan.

Special Authority is required before certain drugs will be covered under the public program and may involve a renewal of application should coverage need to be continued. Unlike some provincial drug plans, the BC Special Authority program does not operate on a reimbursement basis.

For information about the BC Special Authority Program and application forms, visit the Pharmacare website at

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/sa/saindex.html>

Or call, from the Vancouver area: **604-683-7151**

From the rest of BC: **1-800-663-7100**

Deadline approaches for BC plan members with past claims

To help ensure a smooth transition for plan members currently using the drugs, we wrote to those who had claims for these BC Special Authority drugs in the past seven months to let them know that application to the BC Special Authority Drug program would be required for future claims. The notice provided affected plan members with a three-month grace period to complete the application process and provide documentation.

Starting March 31, 2010*, plan members that previously claimed for BC Special Authority drugs now included on our expanded Prior Authorization list will be required to provide a copy of their approval / denial letter from the BC Special Authority Drug program before claims for the drugs can be reimbursed.

*(*Some exceptions may apply. Plan members are notified directly if their deadline extends beyond March 31, 2010.)*

Questions?

For more information about the BC Special Authority Drug program, Manulife's Prior Authorization program or our expanded drug list, please contact your Manulife Financial representative.

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