

# 2015 Prescription Program

## Step Therapy and Prime Specialty Pharmacy

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### STEP THERAPY

A program that encourages the safe and cost-effective use of medication. Under this program, a “step” approach is required to receive coverage for certain high-cost medications.

#### **Q: HOW DOES THE STEP THERAPY PROGRAM WORK?**

A: The Step Therapy Program requires the use of generic products before brand medication will be covered by the pharmacy program. Individuals currently taking a step therapy medication are grandfathered and will be able to continue taking that medication. Any new step therapy prescriptions would need to take the generic first before they can step up and take the brand medication.

#### **Q: WHAT CATEGORIES OF MEDICATION MUST GO THROUGH STEP THERAPY?**

A: Antidepressants, Cox 2/NSAIDS, Diabetes, Glucose Test Strips, Lipid Management, Proton Pump Inhibitors, Biological Immunomodulators, Iron Chelators and Multiple Sclerosis medications must go through step therapy. Go to [bcbsil.com/member/rx\\_drug\\_choices.html](http://bcbsil.com/member/rx_drug_choices.html) to view a full list of medications under the step therapy program.

#### **Q: HOW WILL EMPLOYEES BE IMPACTED? WHAT WILL WE NEED TO DO DIFFERENTLY?**

A: Individuals currently taking a step therapy medication are grandfathered and will be able to continue taking that medication. No additional steps need to be taken by those individuals. Any new step therapy prescriptions will need to take the generic first before they can step up and take the brand medication.

#### **Q: HOW WILL MY PHYSICIAN AND/OR PHARMACY KNOW TO COORDINATE THE PRESCRIPTION UNDER STEP THERAPY?**

A: Employees should be aware of the drug classes that are part of the step therapy program. The full list of medications under the step therapy program is located at [bcbsil.com/member/rx\\_drug\\_choices.html](http://bcbsil.com/member/rx_drug_choices.html). When filling a prescription and confirming pharmacy benefits with Blue Cross Blue Shield, the pharmacy will see that a medication is part of the step therapy program. The pharmacist can then inform the individual. The pharmacy can also contact the health care provider's office to notify him/her of the step therapy program procedures and to determine the use of a generic drug.

#### **Q: WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I CHOOSE NOT TO FOLLOW THE STEP THERAPY PROGRAM?**

A: If an individual goes to a pharmacy to fill a prescription for a brand medication before trying a generic version, the pharmacist will inform the individual that step therapy is in place. He/she will be asked to try a generic version of the medication. If the individual declines, he/she will be responsible for the full payment of the medication. The Blue Cross Blue Shield plan will not cover any portion of the cost of the medication.

#### **Q: IS THERE AN OVERRIDE PROCESS FOR THE STEP THERAPY PROGRAM? FOR EXAMPLE, CAN A PHYSICIAN STATE THAT I CANNOT BEGIN WITH A GENERIC DRUG AND MUST IMMEDIATELY GO TO A HIGHER LEVEL MEDICATION?**

A: If an individual has already tried and failed a generic medication and needs to start taking the brand drug, the doctor will need to provide a letter, via mail or fax, to Blue Cross Blue Shield stating such. Once approved, an override will be put in place for this individual to receive the brand medication. This process typically takes 72 hours. In the case where a physician determines that the individual cannot or should not start usage of a generic drug, he/she will need to submit an appeal to Blue Cross Blue Shield as to why the individual cannot try the generic drug prior to “stepping up” to a brand drug.

#### **Q: HOW PREVALENT IS THE STEP THERAPY PROGRAMS WITH OTHER BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD CLIENTS? HOW PREVALENT WITH BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD'S HIGHER EDUCATION CLIENTS?**

A: Forty percent of Blue Cross Blue Shield's clients have step therapy in place. Thirty percent of Blue Cross Blue Shield's higher education clients have it in place.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (CONTINUED)

### PRIME SPECIALTY PHARMACY

A pharmacy program that provides 24/7 support to individuals utilizing specialty medications to treat chronic, complex medical conditions. These medications often require careful adherence and have special handling or storage requirements and may not be stocked by retail pharmacies.

#### Q: HOW DOES THE PRIME SPECIALTY PHARMACY WORK?

A: Individuals will be required to obtain covered specialty medications through the Prime Specialty Pharmacy. Prime will coordinate getting the prescription set up through the Specialty Pharmacy and will ship the prescription medication overnight to the individual.

For individuals currently receiving their specialty medication at a retail pharmacy, Blue Cross Blue Shield will contact them to inform them of the new process and how to contact Prime Specialty Pharmacy. BCBS will make several attempts to reach the individual. If Blue Cross Blue Shield cannot reach the individual, the next time he/she goes to a retail pharmacy to fill the specialty medication, the prescription will be stopped and the pharmacist will inform the individual that he/she needs to contact Prime Specialty Pharmacy at (877) 627-MEDS (6337) to receive his/her refill.

#### Q: WHAT CATEGORIES OF MEDICATION MUST GO THROUGH PRIME SPECIALTY PHARMACY?

A: Crohns Disease, Hemophilia, Hepatitis C, Psoriasis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis, and Oral Oncology are categories of medication that must go through the Prime Specialty Pharmacy. Refer to the Prime Therapeutics Specialty Pharmacy Drug Management List located at [bcbsil.com/member/rx\\_drug\\_choices.html](http://bcbsil.com/member/rx_drug_choices.html) for a full listing of medications.

#### Q: HOW WILL EMPLOYEES BE IMPACTED? WHAT WILL WE NEED TO DO DIFFERENTLY?

A: Individuals will contact Prime Specialty Pharmacy and Prime handles setting everything up for the individual. When the individual calls Prime to fill a prescription for a specialty medication, payment method will be established as well as where to ship the medication overnight. If there are any questions regarding the actual medication, Prime can reach out directly to the physician to clarify.

#### Q: HOW WILL MY PHYSICIAN AND/OR PHARMACY KNOW TO COORDINATE THE PRESCRIPTION UNDER PRIME SPECIALTY PHARMACY?

A: For current individuals using a specialty medication, Blue Cross Blue Shield will reach out to those members via letter to get their prescription set up through Prime Specialty Pharmacy. For individuals in the future who are diagnosed with a condition that needs a specialty medication, if the member tries to get a specialty prescription filled at a retail pharmacy, an edit will show up in the pharmacy's system for the pharmacist to notify the individual that he/she needs to contact Prime Specialty Pharmacy at (877) 627-MEDS (6337) to obtain the prescription.

#### Q: HOW PREVALENT IS THE SPECIALTY PHARMACY PROGRAM WITH OTHER BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD CLIENTS? HOW PREVALENT WITH BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD'S HIGHER EDUCATION CLIENTS?

A: Ninety percent of Blue Cross Blue Shield's clients have Prime Specialty Pharmacy in place. Ninety percent of Blue Cross Blue Shield higher education clients have it in place.