

BULLETIN

Important information for health science professionals regarding changes to drug coverage under new collective agreement

March 12, 2013

Further to the recently ratified collective agreement between the Health Science Professionals' Bargaining Association and Health Employers' Association of BC, the parties have agreed to move the effective date for full implementation of the Pharmacare tie-in to June 1, 2013. Further, the 90-day grace period will be extended to August 31, 2013.

The BlueNet direct-pay card will also be implemented June 1, 2013. The BlueNet Card allows direct-pay at the pharmacy for eligible prescriptions, instead of the current system of paying up front, and later submitting receipts for reimbursement.

The postponement of the implementation is to allow more time for members to work with their treating physicians to ensure the transition to the Pharmacare formulary tie-in is as smooth as possible. Your physician will need to work with you to obtain special authority if there are medications you are currently using that are not on the Pharmacare formulary. Members are encouraged to contact their care providers as soon as possible to alert them to the change in coverage to help make as smooth a transition as possible.

If the medication you are prescribed is not on the Pharmacare formulary, then your pharmacist will likely suggest a generic alternative which is covered for reimbursement, or you may consult your doctor and ask to be prescribed an equivalent medication that is covered. Alternatively, brand name medications may be eligible for partial coverage which means that you would pay the difference between the cost of the generic equivalent listed on the formulary and the price of the brand name medication. This is known as Low Cost Alternative pricing and is the same language set out in the current collective agreement.

You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the Pharmacare coverage by visiting the Pharmacare website at <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/>. Information about how your physicians may apply for special authority is available on the website.

HSA understands the transition to the Pharmacare tie-in may be difficult in some cases, and will work to support members working through the shift in coverage.

For support in making the transition, please contact HSA labour relations and benefits specialists by sending an email to pharmacare@hsabc.org

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