

New Pharmacy Initiative: Preferred Therapy

BCBSM Pharmacy Initiatives Review

In September 2007, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan ("BCBSM") introduced seven pharmacy initiatives. The goal of the pharmacy initiatives was to improve BCBSM's prescription drug program and help lower costs while providing the same level of safety and quality members expect.

BCBSM regularly reviews the prescription drug program to decide if other prescription drugs should be included in the pharmacy initiatives.

Effective April 1, 2010, BCBSM will add a new pharmacy initiative, Preferred Therapy, to the prescription drug program.

What is Preferred Therapy?

Preferred Therapy is the new pharmacy initiative that encourages doctors to prescribe generic, generic alternative or over-the-counter medications before prescribing more expensive brand-name drugs. This initiative is designed to provide prescription drugs with the same effectiveness and benefits of the higher cost drugs but with lower out-of-pocket costs.

The chart below lists the brand-name drugs effected by the new Preferred Therapy pharmacy initiative.

Drug Category	Targeted Prescription Drug
Cholesterol-lowering drugs	Advicor [®] Simcor [®]
Nasal steroids	Veramyst [®]
Sleep aids & sedatives	Ambien CR [®] Edluar [®]
Antidepressants	Pristiq [®] Effexor XR [®] Luvox [®]
ADHD, ADD, stimulants	Vyvanse [®]
Migraine Therapy	Sumavel Dosepro [®]

Please note the drug categories and medications may change. For the most up-to-date list, visit www.bcbsm.com.

Does Preferred Therapy Affect All Prescriptions?

No. To reduce disruption to members, Preferred Therapy applies only to prescriptions being filled for the first time. Members currently taking one of the targeted drugs and who have filled the prescription in the past six months, can continue to receive refills without interruption.

How Will Preferred Therapy Affect Members?

The first time a member fills a prescription for a drug that is part of this initiative, the pharmacy will contact the member's doctor to see if the prescription can be changed to a generic alternative or generic equivalent. If the doctor chooses to switch the member's prescription, the pharmacy will fill the member's prescription with the generic drug.

If the generic or generic equivalent is not effective, or should not be used in the member's particular situation, then the member's doctor must provide evidence of medical necessity and receive preauthorization from BCBSM for the brand name drug to be covered. Otherwise, the member pays the full cost of the brand name drug.

OptionCare Gets A New Name

Effective February 1, 2010, OptionCare, BCBSM's specialty drug mail order vendor, officially changed their name to Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy, LLC. The name change is a result of Walgreens' purchase of OptionCare in 2007.



Specialty drugs are prescription medications that require special handling, administration or monitoring. These drugs treat complex and chronic conditions, including but not limited to: cancer, chronic kidney failure, multiple sclerosis, organ transplant, and rheumatoid arthritis.

If you have questions or concerns, please call Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy toll free at 866.515.1355 or visit the website at www.walgreensspecialtyrx.com. The hours of operation for the Customer Care Team are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.