Be Sure to Get Appropriate Approval from BCBSVT for Prescription Drugs

Prior Approval
Our prior approval list changes periodically. The most current list can be found on the BCBSVT website or by calling our customer service department at the number listed on the back of your I.D. card. Prior approval is required for drugs that have been on the market less than 12 months, medications without National Drug Code numbers and the following categories:

- Chemotherapeutics
- Growth hormone replacement therapy
- Hepatitis C medications
- Low molecular weight heparin anticoagulants (for use in excess of 30 days per calendar year)
- Primary pulmonary hypertension therapy
- Biologics and other medications

A complete list of drugs that require prior approval appears in our Rx Center at www.bcbsvt.com.

Quantity Limits
If your doctor prescribes a drug in an amount that exceeds certain criteria, such as the manufacturer’s recommendations, we may ask for documentation about why you need more of the drug. Visit our website at www.bcbsvt.com or call our customer service department at the number listed on the back of your I.D. card to get a current list of drugs covered by this review or to learn the quantity limit for a particular drug. At present, we place quantity limits on the following types of drugs:

- Sleeping agents (such as Ambien)
- Glucose test strips
- Inhalers (like Advair)
- Pain medications (like Oxycontin)
- Anti-migraine medications (like Imitrex)

Step Therapy
Our step therapy program saves members money by encouraging patients and their doctors to try less expensive drugs in a therapeutic class before using the newest, most expensive ones. Step therapy applies to drugs in categories such as:

- Certain medications for depression (like Prozac Weekly)
- Non-sedating antihistamines (like Allegra)
- COX-2 inhibitors (like Celebrex)
- Medications for stomach acid (like Nexium)
- Medications for hypertension (like Cozar)
- Certain medications for osteoporosis (like Fosamax D) for Catamount Blue members only
- Certain medications for prostate conditions (like Avodart) for Catamount Blue members only

For a list of drugs that require step therapy, please visit our website at www.bcbsvt.com or call our customer service department at the number listed on the back of your I.D. card to get a current list of drugs covered by this review or to learn the procedures to follow for review of your prescription use.

“Grandfathering” Around Prior Approval, Step Therapy and Quantity Limits to Sunset

Last year, we added requirements for prescription drug coverage (see item at left). When we made the requirements, we “grandfathered” members who were already taking the affected drugs for 12 months. That period will end on December 31 of this year. If you have been grandfathered, you should talk to your doctor about either transitioning to a lower-cost generic drug or evaluating other options.

There are several exceptions to the sunset of the grandfathering for Step Therapy Drugs. For the following categories of drugs, you may still be “grandfathered” and don’t need prior approval at this time:

- SSRIs (anti-depressants)
- Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (blood pressure medications)
- Certain Proton Pump Inhibitors (Aciphex and Nexium)
- COX-2 Inhibitors (Celebrex) if you are over age 60