



Important Pharmacy Terms for True Health New Mexico Members

Prior Authorization

Prior Authorization helps ensure that you're using the best drugs in the safest way. Drugs that require prior authorization are often:

- Newer drugs for which the Health Plan wants to track usage.
- Non-formulary drugs that require the use of formulary drugs prior to coverage. These drugs are not used as a standard first option in treating a medical condition.
- Drugs with potential side effects that the Health Plan wants to monitor for patient safety.
- Drugs categorized as specialty medications.

Step Therapy

Step Therapy ensures you are taking the most effective medication at the best cost. This means trying the least expensive medications usually generic medications or drugs that are considered as the standard first-line treatment.

How Step Therapy Works

- **Step 1:** When your prescribed drug is impacted by step therapy, first you will be asked to try generic or first-line treatment drugs. The drug recommended will be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as providing the same health benefit at a much lower cost.
- **Step 2:** If the generic drug in step 1 does not work for you, then you may be able to receive a brand-name drug. For more information on Step Therapy, call 866.823.1606.

Quantity Limits

To ensure you are getting the most cost-effective dose for your medication, a quantity limit or dose duration may be placed on certain drugs. These limits are based on FDA guidelines, clinical literature, and manufacturer's instructions. Quantity limits promote appropriate use of the drug, prevent waste, and help control costs.

For some drugs, the dosing guidelines may recommend that patients take the drug one time a day in a larger dose instead of several times a day in smaller doses. The quantity limits follow the guidelines and cover one larger dose per day.

Generic Substitutions

A generic drug is a chemically and pharmaceutically equivalent (equal) version of a brand-name drug whose patent has expired. A generic drug meets the same FDA standard for bio-equivalency that brand-name drugs must meet. But a generic drug is usually less costly. Your pharmacist will substitute a generic drug for you automatically when one is available, even if your provider writes a prescription for the brand drug. If the generic drug does not meet your needs, your provider can start a pharmacy exception. You may then receive the brand drug, depending on the drug's clinical criteria and if True Health New Mexico approves the exception.

Therapeutic Interchange

Many drugs work the same way and have the same benefits. Therapeutic interchange is the practice of substituting one drug for another (a therapeutic alternative) when both drugs have the same therapeutic effects. This substituted drug is called the therapeutic alternative. When you get your prescription filled, your pharmacist will tell you if a therapeutic alternative has been made for you. The pharmacist can do this only with your provider's approval.