

November 23, 2015

## 35 Day Supply Limit – Narcotics and High Cost Drugs

### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Effective January 1, 2016, Pacific Blue Cross is limiting coverage of narcotics and high cost drugs to a **35 day supply** per prescription.

### WHY LIMIT DAY'S SUPPLY ON HIGH COST DRUGS?

- **Influence medication adherence** – refilling these medications every month provides members with opportunities for additional counselling from the pharmacist, which can improve adherence to their medication regimen.
- **Promote safety** – more regular visits to the pharmacy allows the pharmacist to assess the member for side effects, drug interactions and identify other concerns members may be having with their medications.
- **Reduce drug wastage** – limiting the amount of medication filled at one time reduces the potential for waste from unused medications should the dosage change or the medication be discontinued. Most high cost drugs are fragile and require special storage and handling. Limiting coverage to a monthly supply reduces risk of compromising the quality of a drug due to mishandling.
- **Maximize cost sharing with BC Pharmacare** – BC Pharmacare also limits its coverage for these drugs<sup>1</sup> to a 35 day supply per prescription. Any quantities in excess of 35 days do not contribute towards the BC Pharmacare deductible and are not paid by Pharmacare. If the private plan does not have this same limit, the surplus amount is charged back to the plan.

### HOW WILL THIS IMPACT MEMBERS?

Very few members will be impacted. This is because most pharmacies already dispense a monthly supply for narcotics and high cost drugs.

Even if a physician writes a prescription for greater than 35 days, the pharmacist has the ability to reduce the quantity dispensed to comply with any plan rules.

**Pay Direct claims:** The pharmacist will be alerted to the limit at point of sale and can then reduce the quantity.

**Reimbursement claims (paper or online):** The same limits will apply. We will notify members who, based on prior claims submitted, will be impacted by this change.

## WILL THIS IMPACT PLANS?

Minimizing wastage of medications, optimizing drug therapy, and aligning with BC PharmaCare's days' supply limits will result in direct savings to plans.

## EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions may be made to accommodate people going on extended vacation or living in rural areas (where travel to a pharmacy exceeds 2 hours). Exceptions increase the supply limit on narcotic and high cost drugs to a maximum of 70 days.

Exceptions will also be made for high cost drugs that are taken/administered less often than every 35 days; for example, Remicade™, which is dosed once every 60 days.

At this time, this does not apply to members on our Nexus system.