

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Step Therapy Fact Sheet with Questions & Answers

Background

Effective January 1, 2010 step therapy offerings will be standardized as a part of the pharmacy offering. This document will provide explanations of our step therapy program, as well as important information about our current formulary options. The step therapy programs will become standard for fully insured customers. Self insured customers that currently have implemented customized step therapy programs will continue with those programs. Blue Cross encourages self insured customers interested in implementing step therapy programs to consider and use the Blue Cross standard options.

Blue Cross offers two formulary options to meet customer and member needs. Each has a Step Therapy program included.

**** Please note that Carleton uses the FlexRx formulary. Information regarding GenRx does not apply to our plans****

- **FlexRx** is the new name of the current standard Blue Cross formulary. Its focus is to provide the highest standard of therapeutic safety and effectiveness through a combination of name brand and generic drugs, including specialty drugs. The step therapy categories included are as follows:
 - Antidepressants
 - Used to treat depression
 - Cholesterol lowering
 - Diabetic glucometers and strips
 - Proton pump inhibitors
 - Used to reduce production of stomach acid
- These categories are considered a “package” and may not be selected or declined individually.
- **GenRx** is our new formulary option designed for maximum value in pharmacy spending for clients and members while maintaining the highest standards in therapeutic safety and effectiveness. Its focus is to provide the same high therapeutic standard as FlexRx while placing greater emphasis on lower-cost equivalents. GenRx is set to address a rapidly growing need in a marketplace looking for high quality, cost-conscious benefit solutions. The step therapy categories included are as follows:
 - Actos/Avandia
 - Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors, Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARBs) and Combinations
 - Used to treat high blood pressure
 - Anticonvulsants
 - Used to treat seizure disorders, migraine, neuropathic pain, fibromyalgia and bipolar disorder
 - Antidepressants
 - Used to treat depression

- Atopic Dermatitis
- Atypical Antipsychotics
- Biologic Immunomodulators: rheumatoid arthritis/psoriasis
- COX-2 Inhibitors - Celebrex
- Cholesterol lowering
- Leukotriene modifiers
 - Used to treat asthma and allergies
- Oxycodone ER (pain management)
- Proton pump inhibitors
 - Used to reduce production of stomach acid

Step Therapy: Q&A

Q. How does the step therapy program work?

A. Below is a step-by-step example of how the step therapy process works:

- A member presents a new prescription for a drug requiring step therapy (Drug B) at the pharmacy
- The pharmacist enters the prescription information into their system
- The claim is submitted for processing – the claims system automatically looks back at the member’s claims history (generally 90 days), if available, to see if the member had a prescription filled in that time period for the prerequisite drug (Drug A)
- If a claim for Drug A is found, the claim will automatically process
- If there is no history of a prescription being filled for Drug A, the prescription claim will be rejected
- The pharmacist can either contact the member’s physician to see if Drug A or another alternative is acceptable or advise the member to contact their physician.
- The physician can then provide a prescription for Drug A or an acceptable alternative drug. If the physician strongly feels that Drug B will best treat your condition then they can submit a step therapy authorization request. If the request meets pre-specified clinical criteria Drug B will be covered.

Q. Where is the step therapy exception authorization request form?

A. These forms can be found online at **bluecrossmn.com**. Type “step therapy” in the “Search” window in the top right-hand corner of your screen.

Q. How can a member find which drugs require step therapy?

A. Formulary drugs that are subject to step therapy have “ST” printed after the drug name listed on the formulary. Printable copies of the formulary can be found on **bluecrossmn.com**. There is additional information on step therapy, including information on prerequisite drugs, available under special programs.

Q. How can a member see if a drug is covered?

A. Members can go online to learn which drugs are covered.

- Both the FlexRx and the GenRx drug lists are available by going to **bluecrossmn.com**. Under the orange “Quick Links” tab, choose “prescription drugs.” Then click on “Search the drug lists.” When the pop

up window appears, choose either the FlexRx or the GenRx drug list. Members will be directed to the FlexRx or the GenRx pages on Prime Therapeutics myrxhealth.com site. Members and providers can use the search tool or refer to the PDF of the FlexRx or the GenRx formulary.

- Members can create an account on the myrxhealth.com site in order to search the drug lists and see accurate drug cost and benefit information.

Q. Is there a grandfather option for any of the drug categories?

A. There is an auto-grandfather that will occur for antidepressants. This means that the prescription will automatically process when the member refills an antidepressant and there is another claim for the same medication in the claims history during the specified look-back period. If there is no history of the member filling a prescription for that antidepressant, completion of the step process is required.

Q. Can members with an open formulary benefit get Drug B at a higher copay?

Step edits will apply to both open and closed formulary benefits. Drug B will be covered only if the step therapy edits are met.

Q. Why is Blue Cross implementing step edits?

Step edits are an effective mechanism to promote cost-effective use of medications. The increase in availability of generic drugs in many therapy classes has created substantial opportunity to better manage pharmacy benefit costs at both the plan and member level. The four selected categories; antidepressants, cholesterol lowering drugs, diabetic glucometers and strips and proton pump inhibitors were selected based on the availability of clinically safe and effective alternatives for target agents and the potential for cost savings.

Prime Therapeutics LLC is an independent company providing pharmacy benefit management services.