



January 2019

Medication Highlights													
	Comment	Generic	Preferred Brand	Non-Preferred Brand	Preferred Specialty	Non-Preferred Specialty		Comment	Generic	Preferred Brand	Non-Preferred Brand	Preferred Specialty	Non-Preferred Specialty
Braftovi	PA				C,M		Ajovy	PA			M,C		
Ilumya	PA				M	C	Copiktra	PA				M	C
Lokelma				C,M			Delstrigo and Pifeltro					M	C
Lucemyra	PA				M	C	Epidiolex	PA				M,C	
Metkovi	PA				M	C	Galafold	PA				M,C	
Mulpleta					C,M		Nocdurna				M,C		
Olumiant	PA				M	C	Orilissa					M	C
Qbrexza							Takhzyra	PA				M	C
Medicare: not covered				C			Xofluza			C,M			
Tibsovo	PA				M	C							

ST indicates that the medication is part of a step-therapy protocol

M indicates Medicare PDL status

QL indicates a quantity limit

C indicates Commercial PDL status

PA indicates that prior authorization is required

Medicare formulary change: Steroid/Beta-Adrenergic inhaler \$8

For 2019, the generic for AirDuo (Fluticasone/Salmeterol) will now be available at an \$8 cost to members for one inhaler. The member's \$260 or \$395 deductible also doesn't need to be satisfied if the member receives this generic (Fluticasone/Salmeterol) versus Advair, Breo Ellipta, Dulera or Symbicort.

The generic version of the inhaler not only offers significant savings to the member, but it also might increase compliance with using the inhaler as prescribed.

FDA updates warnings for Fluoroquinolone Antibiotics

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is ordering labeling changes for fluoroquinolone antibiotics to strengthen warnings about the risks of mental health adverse effects and serious blood sugar disturbances. The goal is to help providers and patients consider the risks and benefits of fluoroquinolones, according to the agency.

"The use of fluoroquinolones has a place in the treatment of serious bacterial infections — such as certain types of bacterial pneumonia — where the benefits of these drugs outweigh the risks, and they should remain available as a therapeutic option," said Edward Cox, MD, director of the Office of Antimicrobial Products in FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

The changes also aim to make the warnings more consistent across labeling for all fluoroquinolones that are taken orally or injected. Previously, mental health adverse effects were listed in the Warnings and Precautions section of the drug labeling, but they varied by individual drug.

Under the new class-wide labeling changes, the mental health effects must be listed separately from other central nervous system adverse effects and be consistent across the labeling for the class. The mental health adverse effects to be included in the class-wide labeling are: disturbances in attention, disorientation, agitation, nervousness, memory impairment and delirium.

The blood glucose disturbances subsection of the labeling for all systemic fluoroquinolones must also explicitly reflect the potential risk of coma with hypoglycemia.

Remind patients with diabetes to take prescribed statins

Network Health encourages members with diabetes to take their prescribed medications and undergo appropriate health screenings. Recently, our efforts revealed that some diabetic

members are not taking a statin, or are unwilling to try a different statin, because of experienced side effects.

Statin-type cholesterol medications have been shown to greatly lower the risk of heart attack and stroke in patients with diabetes. The recommendation is that all diabetics, regardless of cholesterol levels, take a statin unless other medical reasons prevent it.

Please remind patients about the importance of being compliant with their medications and review the benefits of statin medications. Consider starting with a small dose two or three times per week, if necessary.

Study findings don't support opioids for chronic back pain

Journal of the American Medical Association (03/06/18) Vol. 319, No. 9 Krebs, Erin E.; Gravelly, Amy; Nugent, Sean

A recent study compared the use of opioid medication and nonopioid medication for the treatment of patients with moderate to severe chronic back pain or hip or knee osteoarthritis pain. The 12-month study randomized 240 individuals recruited from Veterans Affairs primary care clinics.

Eligible patients had moderate to severe chronic back pain or hip or knee osteoarthritis pain despite analgesic use. The researchers found, however, that the two groups did not differ significantly on pain-related function—the primary outcome—over 12 months. Pain intensity was significantly better in the nonopioid group over the course of the study. Additionally, the researchers found that adverse medication-related symptoms were more common in the opioid group.

Based on the findings, the authors conclude: "Treatment with opioids was not superior to treatment with nonopioid medications for improving pain-related function over 12 months. Results do not support initiation of opioid therapy for moderate to severe chronic back pain or hip or knee osteoarthritis pain."

Medicare patients should receive shingles vaccine at pharmacy

There is currently a shortage of the Shingrix vaccine at most pharmacies, however, please have your patients sign up for the pharmacy waiting list. Medicare members who receive the shot in a doctor's office may be charged extra fees. Getting the shot at their pharmacy avoids any unnecessary extra charges.

Contact Network Health Pharmacy Department

A pharmacist at Network Health is always available to help your office staff with any pharmacy-related questions. They can be reached at gmelis@networkhealth.com, awheaton@networkhealth.com or tregalia@networkhealth.com.

Pharmacy Review

If you have questions about the 2019 pharmacy prescription benefits for Network Health members, or questions about websites where members can obtain information on patient assistance programs to help cover cost of medications, please contact Gary Melis at gmelis@networkhealth.com or 920-720-1696. Gary is available for office visits to discuss any pharmacy-related topics with pharmacy staff.

Preferred Drug List

Network Health's current Preferred Drug List is available from multiple electronic sources. It can be viewed and printed from networkhealth.com in the Prescription Benefit section.

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