

The latest news and views from CINUP

UP DATE

AUGUST 2016

NEW! SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION DRUG PROGRAM

CINUP is committed to protecting the sustainability of your benefit plan. To address rising drug costs and help control expensive claims under the prescription drug coverage of your plan, we are pleased to introduce Special Authorization - a new initiative to all drug plans, effective September 1, 2016.

SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION PROGRAM

What is a Special Authorization (SA) program?

CINUP's SA program applies to a specific list of drugs and requires plan members to submit information from their physician in order for these drugs to be considered an eligible expense under your plan. The review ensures the prescription is the most medically appropriate and cost-effective treatment for their condition and is key to ensuring plan members have access to benefits that may otherwise have been restricted. Though the list is constantly being updated, we have included a current list of the drugs requiring Special Authorization.

Why are we adding an SA program?

It's often a small number of expensive claims that raise the costs of drug plans. The SA program is a proactive approach to monitoring some select high-cost drugs in an effort to ensure the most cost effective avenues are used and to protect and promote the long term sustainability of your drug plan coverage.

The process requires plan members and their physicians to provide additional information to help determine if there are:

- other medications that could be tried first for the condition,
- lower cost medications available that could be a reasonable treatment option for the condition, and

- if other programs are available for the prescribed drug that could lower both your plan costs and any out-of-pocket costs for which your plan members may be responsible.

How does the process work?

If a doctor chooses to prescribe a drug that is on the list, the doctor must complete and submit a *Prescription Drug Special Authorization Request Form* to Manitoba Blue Cross. The Blue Cross Medication Advisory Panel will authorize or deny the drug within five business days and notify the member of the decision.

If approved, plan members can use their drug card to fill their prescription at their local pharmacy. If the Special Authorization is denied, they can choose to pay for the drug out-of-pocket or discuss alternative treatment plans with their doctor.

If a plan member is not aware their drug requires prior approval and takes their prescription to the pharmacy, the pharmacist will advise them the drug needs special authorization. Plan members can choose to purchase the drug at that time, or have the form completed and request approval before purchasing it.

Once the drug is approved for coverage you may obtain subsequent refills from the pharmacy; however, this may be limited to a specific time period and/or quantity of medication. This would depend on whether or not the drug is considered a life sustaining drug.

The SA form is available on www.my-benefits.ca or www.cinup.com websites or by calling the Customer Care Centre at 1.800.665.1234.



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FAQs

Who determines which drugs should be on the Special Authorization list?

SA criteria is guided by the health care professionals on the Blue Cross Medication Advisory Panel, who ensure prescribed drugs are safe and effective and are being used for conditions the government and the manufacturer have approved.

What is the process if I'm eligible under both NIHB and Manitoba Blue Cross?

SA does not impact your current drug claim process with NIHB. As a status employee, you will continue to provide your NIHB drug card to the pharmacist. If the drug is declined through the regular and prior approval processes through NIHB, you would then need to have your physician complete and submit the SA form to Manitoba Blue Cross. For further information on *Prior Approval* through NIHB, please visit their website or call their Drug Exception Centre at 1.800.580.0950.

If this was my physician's treatment choice, why is it being questioned?

The SA process is not questioning your physician's expertise or their prescribing decision. The review simply determines if another more cost-effective drug may be available and appropriate.

What happens if I take the prescription for an SA drug to my pharmacy?

When the pharmacy tries to process the prescription for an SA drug, an electronic message will advise the pharmacist the drug requires Special Authorization. The pharmacist will advise you of the restriction.

Will the pharmacist and my physician be familiar with this process?

Yes. SA is similar to processes employed by other drug benefit providers and by the government.

What happens if my prescription is denied by Manitoba Blue Cross?

Manitoba Blue Cross will authorize or deny the drug within five business days of receipt of the SA form. If the drug is not approved, you will have the choice to pay for the drug yourself or discuss other suitable treatment plans with your doctor.

But what if I need my medication now?

You always have the option of filling the prescription and paying for the drug yourself. You can then have your doctor complete and submit the SA form and, if it is approved, you will be reimbursed retroactively.

Do I have to go through this process every time I get a refill on my prescription?

No. Once the drug is approved for coverage you'll be able to refill your prescription and have it processed in the normal manner; however, this may be limited to a specific time period and / or quantity of medication depending on whether or not the drug is considered a life sustaining drug.

Where can I get the Prescription Drug Special Authorization Request form?

The SA form can be found on www.my-benefits.ca or www.cinup.com or by calling the CINUP Customer Care Centre at 1.800.665.1234.

My physician charges a fee to complete the SA form. Does my drug plan reimburse me for this cost?

No. Your plan does not cover any fees charged by your physician for the completion of this form.

If you have any questions, please contact our
CINUP Customer Care Centre at **1.800.665.1234**.

