



July 1, 2006

Provider Services Department

PHARMACY UPDATE

SBHI Prescription Benefit Change – Polypharmacy

In our continuing efforts to improve patient safety and quality of care, the Authority is implementing a Polypharmacy Management Quality Initiative for Santa Barbara Health Initiative (SBHI) members. This initiative is designed to improve patient care through the reduction of polypharmacy. Polypharmacy refers to the use of multiple medications prescribed to a patient. The potential for a drug-drug interaction is 6% when two (2) medications are prescribed and 50% when five (5) or more medications are prescribed. Polypharmacy may result in incomplete knowledge to the treating physicians and may result in unwanted duplication of drug therapies and possible drug-drug interactions.

Effective August 1, 2006, the scope of pharmacy benefits for SBHI members will include a maximum benefit of ten (10) prescriptions per calendar month. Please note: multiple refills of medications count toward the monthly prescription limit. To help aid in this initiative, we will be identifying members who are currently receiving more than ten (10) prescriptions per month and notifying their PCPs prior to implementation. At that time, the PCP will have the opportunity to review the patient's profile and discontinue any possible duplicate therapies and/or potential drug-drug interactions.

The following disease states and categories are **exempt** from this restriction:

- Nursing Facility Patients
- Newborns using Mother's Identification Number
- Antibiotic Medications
- Medications for Family Planning such as oral contraceptives
- Medications for Treatment of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS Related Conditions



- Medications for Cancer Treatment
- Medications for Diabetes Treatment
- Medications for Transplant Patients

Please remember: all drugs exempt from the monthly prescription limit are still subject to all other SBRHA Guidelines.

If the member exceeds the monthly prescription limit and does not meet any of the above criteria, a prior authorization is required. Providers will utilize our new Medical Request Form (**MRF**), which is attached, and check the appropriate box indicating if this request exceeds the monthly prescription limit. If utilizing an old MRF form, the provider should indicate this is an authorization request to override the monthly prescription limit. *Please fax all MRF requests to (805) 685-7781.* Please remember each medication that exceeds the monthly prescription limit will require a MRF. The MRF is available to download at www.sbrha.org under the Providers Only section.

If you have any questions, please contact Brandy Armenta, Pharmacy Technician, at (805) 685-9525 extension 193.