



<b>ISSUE DATE</b> May 31, 2013	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> June 3, 2013	<b>NUMBER</b> *See below
<b>SUBJECT</b> Prior Authorization of Benzodiazepines; Analgesics, Narcotic Long Acting; and Analgesics, Narcotic Short Acting – Pharmacy Services		<b>BY</b>  Vincent D. Gordon, Deputy Secretary Office of Medical Assistance Programs

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this bulletin is to issue updated handbook pages that include instructions on how to request prior authorization of prescriptions, including the type of medical information needed to evaluate requests for medical necessity, for:

1. Benzodiazepines
2. Analgesics, Narcotic Short Acting
3. Analgesics, Narcotic Long Acting

**SCOPE:**

This bulletin applies to all licensed pharmacies and prescribers enrolled in the Medical Assistance (MA) Program and providing services in the fee-for-service (FFS) delivery system, including pharmacy services to residents of long term care facilities.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Department of Public Welfare’s (Department) Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Board meets semi-annually to review provider prescribing and dispensing practices for efficacy, safety, and quality and to recommend interventions for prescribers and pharmacists through the Department’s Prospective Drug Use Review (ProDUR) and Retrospective Drug Use Review (RetroDUR) programs.

*01-13-26	09-13-28	27-13-26	33-13-28
02-13-24	11-13-24	30-13-24	
03-13-24	14-13-25	31-13-29	
08-13-26	24-13-26	32-13-24	

**COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:**

The appropriate toll free number for your provider type

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs Web site at  
<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/provider/healthcaremedicalassistance/index.htm>

**DISCUSSION:**

During the March 20, 2013 meeting, the DUR Board recommended that the Department require prior authorization of multiple prescriptions of Benzodiazepines; Analgesics, Narcotic Long Acting; and Analgesics, Narcotic Short Acting when the recipient has a record of the following in PROMISE, the Department's Point-of-Sale On-Line Claims Adjudication System, within the past 30 days:

1. 2 or more paid claims for Benzodiazepines
2. 4 or more paid claims for Analgesics, Narcotic Short Acting and Analgesics, Narcotic Long Acting

The Department currently addresses multiple prescribers and questionable utilization in its Retrospective Drug Utilization Review (Retro DUR) educational interventions with prescribing providers. This new requirement for prior authorization will address these multiple prescriptions of these drugs prospectively. The requirement for prior authorization and the guidelines to determine medical necessity of multiple Benzodiazepines; Analgesics, Narcotic Long Acting; and Analgesics, Narcotic Short Acting, as recommended by the DUR Board, were subject to public review and comment, and subsequently approved for implementation by the Department. The requirements for prior authorization and clinical review guidelines to determine the medical necessity of Benzodiazepines; Analgesics, Narcotic Long Acting; and Analgesics, Narcotic Short Acting are included in the attached updated provider handbook pages.

**PROCEDURE:**

The procedures for prescribers to request prior authorization of Benzodiazepines; Analgesics, Narcotic Long Acting; and Analgesics, Narcotic Short Acting are located in SECTION I of the Prior Authorization of Pharmaceutical Services Handbook. The Department will take into account the elements specified in the clinical review guidelines (which are included in the provider handbook pages in the SECTION II chapter related to Benzodiazepines; Analgesics, Narcotic Long Acting; and Analgesics, Narcotic Short Acting) in reviewing the prior authorization request to determine medical necessity.

As set forth in 55 Pa. Code § 1101.67(a), the procedures described in the handbook pages must be followed to ensure appropriate and timely processing of prior authorization requests for drugs that require prior authorization.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Prior Authorization of Pharmaceutical Services Handbook - Updated pages

## SECTION II

[Benzodiazepines](#)

[Analgesics, Narcotic Long Acting](#)

[Analgesics, Narcotic Short Acting](#)