

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE HANDBOOK
PRIOR AUTHORIZATION OF PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES

I. Requirements for Prior Authorization of Benzodiazepines

A. Prescriptions That Require Prior Authorization

Prescriptions for Benzodiazepines that meet any of the following conditions must be prior authorized:

1. A prescription for a Benzodiazepine when prescribed for a child under 21 years of age.
2. A prescription for a Benzodiazepine when a recipient has a concurrent prescription for an Oral Buprenorphine Agent
3. A prescription for a Benzodiazepine when there is a record of a recent paid claim for another Benzodiazepine in PROMISe, the Department's Claims Adjudication System (therapeutic duplication).
4. A prescription for either a preferred or non-preferred Benzodiazepine when there is a record of 2 or more paid claims for Benzodiazepines in PROMISe, the Department's Point-of-Sale On-Line Claims Adjudication System within the past 30 days.

B. Review of Documentation for Medical Necessity

In evaluating a request for prior authorization of a prescription for a Benzodiazepine , the determination of whether the requested prescription is medically necessary will take into account the following:

1. For a child under the age of 21 years, whether the child:
 - a. Has a diagnosis of:
 - i. Seizure disorder **OR**
 - ii. Chemotherapy induced nausea and vomiting **OR**
 - iii. Cerebral palsy **OR**
 - iv. Spastic disorder **OR**
 - v. Dystonia

AND

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- b. Does not have a concurrent prescription for an Oral Buprenorphine Agent

AND

- c. Is receiving palliative care
2. For a recipient with a concurrent prescription for an Oral Buprenorphine Agent, whether:
- a. The prescriptions for the Oral Buprenorphine Agent and the Benzodiazepine are written by the same prescriber or, if written by different prescribers, all prescribers are aware of the other prescription(s)

AND

- b. The recipient has an acute need for therapy with a Benzodiazepine
3. For therapeutic duplication, whether:
- a. The recipient is being titrated to, or tapered from, a drug in the same class

OR

- b. Supporting peer reviewed literature or national treatment guidelines corroborate concomitant use of the medications being requested
4. For more than 2 Benzodiazepines, whether:
- a. The multiple prescriptions are consistent with medically accepted prescribing practices and standards of care, including support from peer-reviewed literature or national treatment guidelines that corroborate use of the quantity of medication being prescribed

AND

- b. The multiple prescriptions are written by the same prescriber or, if written by different prescribers, all prescribers are aware of the other prescription(s)

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3. The recipient does not meet the clinical review guidelines listed above but, in the professional judgment of the physician reviewer, the services are medically necessary to meet the medical needs of the recipient.

C. Clinical Review Process

Prior authorization personnel will review the request for prior authorization and apply the clinical guidelines in Section B. above, to assess the medical necessity of the request for a prescription for a Benzodiazepine. If the guidelines in Section B. are met, the reviewer will prior authorize the prescription. If the guidelines are not met, the prior authorization request will be referred to a physician reviewer for a medical necessity determination. Such a request for prior authorization will be approved when, in the professional judgment of the physician reviewer, the services are medically necessary to meet the medical needs of the recipient.

References:

1. Varley CK, Smith CJ. Anxiety disorders in the child and teen. *Pediatr Clin N Am.* 2003;50:1107-1138
2. Ivanecko A, Crabtree VM, Gozal D. Sleep in children with psychiatric disorders. *Pediatr Clin N Am.* 2004;51)2*,62-68
3. McClellan JM, Werry JS. Evidence-based treatments in child and adolescent: an inventory. *Journal of the AM Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry.* 2003; 42(12):1388-1400.
4. Common oral medications that may need tapering. *Pharmacist's Letter/Prescriber's Letter* 2008;24(12):241208
5. Getting Patients off Benzos: Tips from Old Masters The *Carlat Psychiatry Report* September 2005, Volume 3, Number 9