

SEAFARERS HEALTH AND BENEFITS PLAN

5201 Auth Way
Camp Springs, Maryland 20746-4275
(301) 899-0675

Margaret R. Bowen
Administrator

PRESCRIPTION BENEFIT UPDATES

October 27, 2017

Dear Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan Participant:

This letter is to inform you of certain changes in prescription benefits that will take place on January 1, 2018 that will affect participants who are taking certain prescription drugs.

New Policy Regarding Opioid Medications

You have probably heard about the opioid crisis in the U.S. Every day, more than 90 people die in this country from an opioid overdose. The misuse of opioids has serious effects on health, productivity and all other aspects of life. OptumRx, the Plan's Pharmacy Benefits Manager, has recommended that SHBP adopt its Opioid Risk Management Program in order to prevent the misuse of these drugs, and to reduce the risk of dependence, addiction and overdose. Effective January 1, 2018, the Plan is implementing this program, which places certain limits on these medications.

The following is a brief summary of the changes for any prescriptions filled after January 1, 2018 for opioid medications:

- A person may only receive a maximum of a 7 day course of short acting opioids at one time. Only two 7 day courses of a short acting opioid prescription will be permitted in a 60 day period.
- Quantity limits will apply to each prescription of short acting opioids.
- Limits on strength of each dosage.
- Prior Authorization will be required for each long acting opioid prescription.

However, your doctor can request prior authorization from OptumRx to receive an exception to these policies if you require pain medication more frequently or at a higher dosage (for example, if you have a prescription that is necessary due to cancer treatment).

Other Prescription Changes

OptumRx is making some changes in the formulary on January 1, 2018. A formulary is a list of prescription drugs that are covered by the Plan. The formulary is divided into three tiers – drugs in tier 1 (which includes commonly used generic drugs) have the lowest out-of-pocket cost, tier 2 (preferred brand-name drugs on the formulary) is the middle tier, and drugs in tier 3 (higher cost brand-name drugs) have the highest out-of-pocket cost.

If you are currently taking a drug that is impacted by any of the above changes, you will receive a letter from OptumRx around November 1st notifying you whether your drug is now subject to a prior authorization requirement, quantity limit, or higher tier placement. In some cases, OptumRx will also offer a lower cost alternative medication in the letter.

If you are affected by these changes, you should talk to your doctor about your options as soon as possible so that you will not be without appropriate medication. Your doctor can request a prior authorization on your behalf and in most cases, can electronically prescribe through OptumRx's system.

If you receive a letter from OptumRx and have specific questions about your impacted drug, contact OptumRx customer service at the toll-free member phone number on your OptumRx ID card.

If you have any questions about the coverage that you receive from the Plan, you may contact the Plan at 1-800-252-4674. You may also view additional general information about your health coverage at www.seafarers.org, under the Member Benefits tab.

Sincerely,

Margaret R. Bowen
Administrator