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Ohio Medicaid Launches Unified Preferred Drug List

UPDL implementation strengthens patient drug adherence, streamlines prior authorization

COLUMBUS—On January 1, Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) members will realize another benefit of the agency's commitment to transparency and access through the official introduction of a [unified preferred drug list \(UPDL\)](#). The UPDL requires ODM's managed-care plans (MCP) to use its single preferred list of medications, reducing confusion for Medicaid members, their health care providers, and pharmacists.

"It is common for drugs with the exact same chemical makeup, such as insulin, to be sold under multiple names, causing confusion for our members, health care providers and pharmacists," said Maureen Corcoran, director of Ohio Medicaid. "Multiple drug lists created headaches, particularly if a member changed plans and the drug name on the list of their new plan differed from the previous plan. The UPDL eliminates the need for the pharmacist to contact their doctor for a new prescription for the same drug under a different name, which could lead to delays in the member getting their prescription filled."

Prescribers and pharmacies will have only one preferred medication list to learn and manage, versus the previous six. Regardless of which managed-care plan members are enrolled, they only need to know one list of preferred medications. The UPDL also streamlines the prior authorization process for many drugs.

"Eliminating uncertainty and unnecessary administrative requirements will assist members' understanding of and adherence to their treatment plans, as they strive for healthier outcomes," continued Corcoran.

The ODM Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee made final recommendations about which drugs to include on the UPDL. Pharmacists and clinicians from the managed-care plans work with ODM on an ongoing basis to maintain the UPDL and prior authorization guidelines. While the UPDL simplifies management of the most commonly prescribed drugs, all Federal Drug Administration approved pharmaceuticals remain available to Medicaid members.

Medicaid members with questions regarding the new UPDL can email ODM at Medicaid_pharmacy@medicaid.ohio.gov.

Ohio Medicaid and the managed care plans will transition to the UPDL during the first quarter of 2020. Beginning April 1, managed-care plans will be formally monitored for compliance with the UPDL.

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