



# **All About BC PharmaCare**

# What is BC PharmaCare?



- British Columbia's prescription drug program that helps BC residents pay for:
  - Eligible prescription drugs
  - Diabetic supplies
  - Prosthetic devices
  - Ostomy supplies
  - Smoking cessation products
  - Prescription fees

# What Does PharmaCare Not Cover?



**BC Centre for Disease Control**



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CENTRE *for* EXCELLENCE  
*in* HIV/AIDS

# Different PharmaCare Plans

Plan Abbreviation	Plan Description
Plan I	Fair PharmaCare
Plan C	Income assistance
Plan G	Psychiatric medications
Plan W	First Nations Health Benefits
Plan P	Palliative
Plan D	Cystic Fibrosis

# Payment Structure

When you reach  
Your **DEDUCTIBLE**

When you reach  
Your **FAMILY MAXIMUM**



- Families will pay 100% of **eligible** prescription drug costs until reaching their annual deductible, at which point PharmaCare will be **assisting** with further eligible costs

# How is a Deductible Determined?

- Based on income from 2 years prior
- Process exists to adjust deductible if income drastically changes
- Low-income families may not have a deductible
- Online PharmaCare estimator where you can calculate your deductible



# Nitty Gritty Part I

- Low-Cost Alternative (LCA)
  - Covers cost of generic vs. brand-name medication



	Brand name cost	Generic name cost
Ramipril	\$115	\$20
Fluticasone/salmeterol MDI	\$180	\$60
Ciprofloxacin	\$320	\$65

\*costs are approximate based on 100 tablets or standard 120 dose MDI inhalers

# Nitty Gritty Part II

- Reference Drug Program (RDP)
  - When more than one type of medication can be used to treat the same condition, meds get grouped together and PharmaCare will fully pay for the less costly drug, while others may be eligible for partial coverage



	Full benefit	Partial benefit	Non-benefit
Medication	Pantoprazole	Esomeprazole	Dexlansoprazole
Cost	\$35	\$70	\$250

# Special Authority

- PharmaCare covers some drugs under specific circumstances
- If a limited coverage drug is ordered, a request for special authority must be submitted
- Prescribers or pharmacists working in a hospital/primary care setting can apply for special authority
- Coverage is **NOT** retroactive and must be in place prior to a patient filling a medication



BCPharmaCare  
Special Authority 

# An Example

- When used solely to treat constipation, lactulose **is not** a benefit



- When used to treat hepatic encephalopathy, lactulose **is** a benefit



# Exceptions & Exceptional Status

- Not all prescribers can apply for special authority for all meds
  - Only neurologists specializing in MS can apply for MS meds coverage
- Not all prescribers need to apply for special authority for all meds
  - Endocrinologists ordering insulin glargine have automatic special authority
- Exceptional status:
  - For meds not covered by PharmaCare (and no option for special authority), prescribers can apply for exceptional coverage (e.g. pregabalin for non-palliative patients)

# Days' Supply Policies

- Maximum fill:
  - 30 days for antibiotics, sedatives, sleeping pills, barbiturates
  - 100 days for longer-term meds (antihypertensives, insulin)
- Travel supply:
  - May “top up” existing supply to a maximum of 100 days

# Tips

- Prior to initiating costly medications, have a conversation with your patients about affordability
- Patients may also have private insurance plans (PBC, AHE, Manulife) that can pick up some of the cost, but they will need to contact them directly
- Patients who insist on brand name medications will need to have “No substitution,” or “Brand name only,” written on their prescriptions for private payers to pay
- Ask your pharmacists for help – we’re around and happy to assist

# Resources

- Pharmacare formulary
  - <https://pharmacareformularysearch.gov.bc.ca/Search.xhtml>
- Special authority drug list
  - c
- BC Pharmacare
  - [BC PharmaCare: Get help paying for medications and medical supplies - Province of British Columbia](#)

# Questions?

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