

Special Bulletin

January 4, 2006

New Program for Self-Administered Injectable or Oral Biotechnology Drugs, Effective 3/1/06

In recent years, Highmark Blue Shield has taken steps to help manage the rising costs of medications. For example, we have a streamlined program for PremierBlueSM Shield physicians through which they can order certain injectable drugs for their Highmark patients. A key component of this program has been the use of Medmark, Inc., a specialty pharmacy provider.

Effective March 1, 2006, Highmark Blue Shield will introduce a program for self-administered injectable or oral biotechnology specialty drugs. Members who use these specialty drugs will need to obtain them exclusively from Medmark. These drugs will no longer be covered if obtained at a retail pharmacy or via mail order service. This new program is designed to:

- enhance integrated care and utilization management for patients who use these drugs
- ensure the drugs are administered in the most appropriate and effective manner
- simplify the precertification process for these medications
- reduce costs by minimizing waste

This program can be used for all Highmark Blue Shield patients. Due to the new Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage regulations, the program is not mandatory for Medicare Advantage patients. However, Medicare Advantage patients still have the option to obtain their specialty drugs through Medmark.

If you have patients who are impacted by this change, you will soon receive a separate notification with a list of their names. We will also send letters to our members currently taking the affected drugs alerting them that, effective March 1, 2006, they will need to obtain these specialty drugs through Medmark.

Simplified Precertification Process

There are no changes to medical policy or procedures. Members whose benefit designs currently require precertification for certain drugs will continue to require precertification. It remains the physician's responsibility to obtain precertification.

Beginning March 1, 2006, physicians can simply make one telephone call to Medmark at 1-888-347-3416 to initiate the precertification process and to order these specialty drugs for your patients. Through this simplified procedure, physicians save time and members receive these medications promptly and directly at their home.

In addition to calling Medmark, physicians can continue to use the *Specialty Drug Request Form*, which can be found in the *Provider Forms* section on our Provider Resource Center at www.highmarkblueshield.com. A copy of the form is also attached for your convenience.

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Reducing Costs by Minimizing Waste

In addition to the move to Medmark, on March 1, 2006, the member's *retail* pharmacy supply limit (usually a 30-day or one-month supply) and cost-sharing will apply as specified in the member's existing prescription drug benefit design. Although patients used to be able to obtain 90-day supplies of these drugs, many found they could not tolerate them and many dosages were not used. This program will greatly reduce the amount of unused dosages of these medications, some of which can cost as much as thousands of dollars per month.

Reminder: Beginning March 1, 2006, Highmark Blue Shield members⁺ will not have coverage for these drugs if they are obtained at a regular retail pharmacy or via mail order service.

⁺ Medicare Advantage members may continue to obtain these drugs at a retail pharmacy or through mail order service.

The drugs that will be included in this new program are:

Actimmune	Gonal-F	Repronex
Apokyn	Hepsera	Revatio
Avonex	Humatrope	Ribasphere
Baraclude	Humira	Roferon A
Betaseron	Infergen	Saizen
Bravelle	Intron A	Sandostatin/Sandostatin LAR
Cerezyme	Kineret	Sensipar
Cetrotide	Leuprolide	Serostim
Copaxone	Lioresal Intrathecal	Tarceva
Copegus	Lupron/Lupron Depot	Targretin
Eligard	Menopur	Temodar
Enbrel	Norditropin	Tev-Tropin
Etoposide	Nutropin	Thalomid
Follistim	Pegasys	Tobi
Forteo	PEG-Intron	VePesid
Fuzeon	Pulmozyne	Viadur
Ganirelix	Raptiva	Xeloda
Genotropin	Rebetol	Zoladex
Gleevec	Rebif	Zorbtive

Note: Other applicable drugs may be added in the future.

If you have specific questions about the new program for self-administered injectable or oral biotechnology specialty drugs, please contact your Provider Relations representative.