Pharmacy Coverage and Step Therapy

February 1, 2012

Some employees and family members received several letters from Cigna Pharmacy informing them that a specific medication they take is subject to Step Therapy. As the letters explain, Step Therapy is a clinical cost management program that promotes the use of cost-effective and therapeutically appropriate medications. There are several medication options, including generic medication, for many conditions. Step Therapy promotes cost savings for the patient and the employer. The patient’s co-pay is lower and the City saves by paying for a more affordable medication. Because the City self-funds our medical and pharmacy coverage, lower costs mean lower increases to our premium each year.

Step Therapy is used for several common ongoing medical conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heartburn, and asthma. Step Therapy requires that certain medications, typically generics and low cost brands, are used before other more costly medications are covered.

When you fill a prescription for a Step Therapy medication, you and your physician will receive a letter explaining what needs to be done before you fill the medication a second time.

At any time your physician can request authorization to continue coverage for a Step Therapy medication for medical reasons. If you have questions about Step Therapy please contact the City’s onsite Cigna Pharmacy Rep, Kim Baker, at 602-534-5370.

Approved By

City of Phoenix Personnel Department