

Medical Assistance Prescription Coverage Limit

A Factsheet for Consumers



On **January 3, 2012**, the state reduced pharmacy coverage to **6 prescriptions per month** for adults in fee-for-service Medical Assistance (ACCESS).

Will this change affect me?

This change applies to you if you use the **PA ACCESS card** to get your prescriptions and you are age 21 or older unless you are pregnant or live in a nursing home or ICF/MR.

If you are in a **Medical Assistance managed care plan** and your plan adopts the 6 prescription limit, it has to mail you a letter 30 days before the change. As of January 2012 two plans, *United Healthcare* and *UPMC for You*, have decided to adopt this limit.

If you have Medicare, **Medicare Part D** covers most of your drugs. This change only applies to the prescriptions you fill using the PA ACCESS card. Because Part D covers most drugs, very few people with both Medicare and ACCESS use the ACCESS card to fill more than 6 drugs.

What can I do if I can't get my medicine because of the 6 drug per month limit?

1. Ask for an **Emergency Supply**

If your medicine is denied at the pharmacy because of the 6 drug per month limit, ask your pharmacist for a 5-day emergency supply.

If your pharmacist decides you need the medicine right away, the state must pay for the 5-day supply. After you get a 5-day supply, talk to your doctor about what to do next.

2. Create a **Work Around Plan**

Many drugs will be covered by an "automatic exception." This means you can get them even after you reach the six drug limit. The full list of drugs that will be covered under an automatic exception is on page three.

List all of the drugs you take, what each treats, and when during the month you usually fill each drug. Then look at the list of drugs that will be automatically covered.

Medication	Condition it treats or prevents	Automatically Covered	Day of month filled
<i>Ex: Insulin</i>	<i>Diabetes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>15th</i>

Circle your drugs that are **not** automatically covered. Try to fill these early in the month, as one of the first six drugs you fill.

Get your drugs that are automatically covered later in the month. They should be covered even if you have already reached the monthly limit. If you fill these drugs earlier in the month, they will count against your limit of six.

3. Talk to your doctor

You will probably need your doctor’s help to change the timing of when you fill your drugs. Also, if you get a 5-day supply, you will need your doctor to ask for a “benefit limit exception” to get the drug for the rest of the month.

Show your doctor your list of medications and the automatic exception list. Ask:

- Can I stop taking any of my drugs?
- Which could I stop taking for a week or two (and then fill early next month)?
- Can you request a “benefit limit exception” for the drug I need right now?

Which drugs will be automatically covered?

The drugs listed below will be covered by an “automatic exception.” This means they will be covered even after you reach the six drug limit. For the drugs with an asterisk (*), the state must have a record of your illness for the benefit limit exception to happen automatically.

Drugs to treat:

- Abnormal or irregular heartbeat
- Angina
- Asthma or COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Bipolar disorder*
- Cancer
- Depression*
for patients with depression
- Diabetes
- Enzyme deficiencies
- Glaucoma
- Hemophilia
- Hepatitis
- High blood pressure*
for patients with angina, heart disease, heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, diabetes or glaucoma
- HIV/AIDS
- Immune deficiency
- Infection*
for patients with HIV/AIDS, cancer, organ transplant, sickle cell anemia or diabetes
- Multiple sclerosis
- Nausea and vomiting*
for patients with cancer or pancreatitis
- Opiate dependency
- Parkinson’s disease
- Pulmonary hypertension
- Serious mental illness
- Thyroid disorders

Drugs to prevent:

- Blood clots
- Pregnancy
- Seizures*
for patients with seizure disorder

Drugs to:

- Reduce stomach acid*
for patients with gastrointestinal bleeding, Barrett’s esophagitis or Zollinger Ellison
- Stop migraine headaches
- Suppress the immune system

For More Information

For more information, contact the Medical Assistance Recipient Service Center at (800) 657-7925 or the Pennsylvania Health Law Project at (800) 274-3258.