

# Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions®

An Independent Health  company

PHARMACY BENEFITS NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2018

## Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions enters innovative agreements with two pharmaceutical manufacturers

As part of our commitment to deliver proactive clinical management for your clients and their employees, Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions (PBD) is proud to announce new, unique partnerships with a pair of major pharmaceutical manufacturers. Effective January 1, 2018, PBD launched programs with Johnson & Johnson and Boehringer Ingelheim that are designed to help improve the health status of our members diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), respectively.

### **Johnson and Johnson - Invokana®**

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), approximately 2 million people in New York, or 12.5% of the adult population, have diabetes. Individuals with uncontrolled diabetes have a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, amputation, end-stage kidney disease, blindness and death. In addition to the increasing number of those diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes, and the associated health risks, the cost of treating these patients contributes to the rising cost of health care at an alarming rate. People with diabetes have medical expenses approximately 2.3 times higher than those who do not. Diabetes and prediabetes cost an estimated \$21.6 billion in New York State each year, according to the ADA. Ensuring medication adherence and effectiveness is an important step to improving health outcomes and managing high costs associated with diabetes.

Our partnership with Johnson and Johnson is the first of its kind in Western New York. This initiative enables PBD to monitor blood glucose levels of its members who are prescribed Invokana®, a medication prescribed to those with Type 2 Diabetes to control glucose levels. Members who do not successfully reduce their blood glucose level with Invokana will be contacted directly by a case manager from Independent Health to determine why this medication has not been successful and to identify solutions, possibly through further evaluation by their physician, improved medication adherence or other corrective action.

### **Boehringer Ingelheim - Stiolto Respimat®**

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) refers to a group of diseases that cause airflow blockage and breathing-related problems. It includes emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and in some cases asthma. Chronic lower respiratory disease, primarily COPD, was the third leading cause of death in the United States in 2014. It is estimated that over 15.7 million Americans (6.4%) have been diagnosed with COPD. Treatment of this condition can alleviate symptoms, decrease the frequency and severity of exacerbations, increase exercise tolerance, reduce emergency room visits or hospital stays, and improve health status. It is for these reasons among others, that ensuring effective treatment is extremely important in improving outcomes and managing high costs associated with COPD.

PBD's agreement with Boehringer Ingelheim is the first of its kind in the nation. By leveraging readily accessible data, we are now able to measure medication performance by identifying improvements in COPD for patients prescribed Stiolto Respimat®, which contains two medications that are used as maintenance treatment for patients with COPD. By adequately controlling a patient's COPD with this inhaler, we hope to reduce the need to add an additional steroid inhaler and decrease use of rescue inhalers, therefore reducing overall costs associated with treatment.

By utilizing these innovative approaches, PBD can ensure outcomes are improved for our members while mitigating extensive costs associated with chronic disease states. We will continue to review pharmacologic classes for opportunities to develop additional innovative strategies for clinical and contract management. Through these partnerships, we will be able to carry out our mission of helping your clients get the most out of their health care investment.

Please direct questions or comments you have about the Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions newsletter to:

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## More effective shingles vaccine now available

There are an estimated one million cases of shingles in the United States each year. One in three Americans will develop shingles in their lifetime. The risk increases to one in two for adults aged 85 years and older.

In October of 2017, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Shingrix® for the prevention of herpes zoster (shingles) in adults age 50 and older. Shingles vaccination is the only way to protect against shingles and postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), the most common complication from shingles. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that healthy adults age 50 and older get two doses of the shingles vaccine called Shingrix, separated by 2 to 6 months, to prevent shingles and the complications from the disease.

Shingrix provides strong protection against shingles and PHN. Two doses of Shingrix is more than 90% effective at preventing shingles and PHN. Protection stays above 85% for at least the first four years after vaccination. Shingrix is the preferred vaccine, over Zostavax, a shingles vaccine in use since 2006. Since the risk of shingles and PHN increases as individuals age, it is important for your clients' employees to have strong protection against shingles as they get older.

### Who should get Shingrix?

Individuals who have had shingles in the past and/or have received Zostavax can get Shingrix to help prevent future occurrences of the disease. Chickenpox and shingles are related because they are caused by the same virus (varicella zoster virus). After a person recovers from chickenpox, the virus stays dormant (inactive) in the body. It can reactivate years later and cause shingles.

Individual should not get Shingrix if they:

- have ever had a severe allergic reaction to any component of the vaccine or after a dose of Shingrix.
- tested negative for immunity to varicella zoster virus. Those who have tested negative should get the chickenpox vaccine.
- currently have shingles.
- currently are pregnant or breastfeeding. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should wait to get Shingrix.

Shingrix is expected to cost around \$280 for a full course of therapy (two doses). This is slightly higher than Zostavax, which costs \$210. However, a cost effectiveness analysis conducted by the CDC revealed that, under most assumptions, vaccination with Shingrix prevented more disease at lower overall costs than did vaccination with Zostavax.

## Two new account managers join Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions

Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions is excited to announce the recent addition of two new staff members to our account management team.



**Melissa Sexton** has joined the organization as Account Manager, Employer Group Waiver Plans (EGWP) Prescription Drug Plan (PDP). In her position, Melissa is responsible for interfacing directly with EGWP PDP clients and for the co-development of long-term strategy for her assigned accounts. She oversees the implementation of new EGWP PDP clients and benefit changes for existing clients, while providing overall account management to ensure that strategic goals are achieved relative to client base and overall customer satisfaction. Melissa comes to Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions with extensive benefit consultant and sales experience from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York. She holds both a Master of Business Administration degree in Management Information Systems and International Business and a bachelor's degree in German and International Studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo.



**Ryan Reed** serves as Account Manager, Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions. In his current role, Ryan works to provide co-development of strategy and overall account management for his assigned clients, including benefit modeling, plan performance reviews, and open enrollment meeting assistance. Ryan brings to Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions a comprehensive understanding of current health care and pharmaceutical industry trends, as well as experience working with brokers, pharmacy benefit managers and third-party administrators as a benefit consultant. Most recently, he worked as an account executive in the employee benefits department with the Stahlka Agency. Prior to that, he served as a senior account specialist for self-funded services with Independent Health. He received his bachelor's degree in criminal law from Medaille College.

## WE'RE AVAILABLE TO ATTEND HEALTH OR BENEFIT FAIRS

Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions would like to remind you that representatives from our client support team are available to attend any health or benefit fairs which your clients may be hosting. If you have a client who is hosting an upcoming benefit fair in the Western New York area and would like a member of our team to attend, please contact our Client Support Team at **(716) 250-4403**.

## Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions drug formulary update

The Independent Health Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee, which is made up of 15 participating physicians and four network community pharmacists, meets quarterly to review and make changes to the drug formulary. All drug tier decisions made by the committee are based on efficacy and safety first, and economics only after clinical effectiveness has been determined.

Here are changes to the Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions drug formulary that were recommended by the P&T Committee at its December 2017 meeting:

### The following medications were added to the formulary:

DRUG	CATEGORY	TIER	COMMENTS
Juluca <sup>®</sup>	Antiviral, HIV	Tier 2	
Abilify MyCite <sup>®</sup>	Antipsychotic	Tier 3	PA, SP
Calquence <sup>®</sup>	Lymphoma	Tier 3	PA, SP
Prevymis <sup>®</sup>	Antiviral	Tier 3	PA
Verzenio <sup>®</sup>	Breast Cancer	Tier 3	PA, SP
Vyzulta <sup>®</sup>	Glaucoma	Tier 3	PA, ST

### The following changes were/will be made to the formulary:

- Colcrys<sup>®</sup> – Move to NF
- Tyrosint<sup>®</sup> – Move to NF
- Mitigare<sup>®</sup> – Move to NF
- Lorzone<sup>®</sup> – Move to NF
- Carisoprodol Products – Move to NF
- Granix<sup>®</sup>/Zarxio<sup>®</sup> – Remove PA
- Soliqua – Move to T2, ST
- Belsomra<sup>®</sup> – Move to T2, ST, QL
- Cambia<sup>®</sup> – Move to T3, PA, QL
- Aubagio<sup>®</sup> – Move to T2, PA
- Lotemax<sup>®</sup> – Move to NF

### The following new generic medications are available:

BRAND NAME	GENERIC NAME	CATEGORY
Coreg CR <sup>®</sup>	carvedilol	Beta-blocker
Aczone <sup>®</sup>	dapsone gel	Acne
Nuedexta <sup>®</sup>	dextromethorphan/quinidine	Emotional Disturbance
Copaxone <sup>®</sup> 40mg/ml	glatiramer acetate injection	Multiple Sclerosis
Isoptocarpine <sup>®</sup>	pilocarpine ophth	Glaucoma
Testim <sup>®</sup>	testosterone gel	Hormone
Treximet <sup>®</sup>	sumatriptan/naproxen	Migraine

### The following medications were reviewed and will remain non-formulary:

- Fiasp<sup>®</sup>
- Ozempic<sup>®</sup>

### The following medications were reviewed and will be covered as a medical benefit:

- Fasentra<sup>®</sup> – SP, PA
- Sublocade<sup>®</sup> – PA
- Zilretta<sup>®</sup> – PA
- Mepsevii<sup>®</sup> – PA
- Yescarta<sup>®</sup> – PA

#### ABBREVIATION KEY

PA: Prior Authorization  
 ST: Step Therapy  
 NF: Non-Formulary  
 SP: Specialty Medication  
 QL: Quantity Limit  
 AL: Age Limit