

NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM POLICY UPDATE

Concurrent Use of Two Long-Acting Opioids

To ensure appropriate use of opioids, effective March 1, 2017 the NIHB Program will no longer approve coverage for the concurrent use of two long-acting opioids, including the combination of a long-acting opioid with methadone. If a client has already been approved on a Limited Use long-acting opioid, claims for long-acting morphine will be rejected in the system. If you have a client who is switching from a Limited Use opioid to long-acting morphine please call the NIHB Drug Exception Centre at 1-800-580-0950. Exceptions, including clients who are taking concurrent opioids for palliative care or cancer treatment, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Clients may appeal denials of coverage by following the usual appeals process.

Reduction in Dose Coverage Limit for Opioids

To ensure the safety of clients, on January 3, 2017, the NIHB Program lowered the dose coverage limit for opioids to 400 morphine equivalents per day.

NIHB is gradually reducing the opioid dose coverage limit to be in line with prescribing guidelines. This does not apply to clients who are taking opioids for cancer or palliative pain management.

In some cases, clients may be exempt from the dose coverage limit. Pharmacists should call the Drug Exception Centre at 1-800-580-0950 when the dose limit is reached.

Pharmacist Prescribing – Policy Update

The NIHB pharmacist prescriber policy was updated effective December 1, 2016. Under the new policy, NIHB will reimburse claims of Schedule 1 drugs prescribed by pharmacists that fall within the pharmacist's scope of practice, as defined by the relevant provincial and territorial regulations, and which are benefits included in NIHB's Drug Benefit List. Please note: reimbursement is limited to coverage of the drug claim. Please refer to the NIHB Provider Guide for Pharmacy Benefits for the full policy statement.

Pharmacist-Initiated Treatment – Update to List of Medications and Conditions

NIHB has reviewed and updated the list of medications and conditions which are eligible for reimbursement when prescribed or recommended in accordance with the Pharmacist Initiated Treatment Policy. New eligible treatments are listed below. The full list is available in the NIHB Provider Guide for Pharmacy Benefits.

Condition	Eligible Schedule 2, 3 and unscheduled treatments
Acne	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Topical benzoyl peroxide products listed in AHFS class 84:04.92 of NIHB Drug Benefit List (DBL)
Bacterial conjunctivitis and otitis externa	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Polymyxin B sulfate + gramicidin dropsBacitracin zinc, polymyxin B sulfate ophthalmic ointment

<p>Childhood nutrition – may be initiated by a pharmacist only in children up to age 6 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multivitamins listed in AHFS 88:28.00 of NIHB DBL • Vitamin D drops and liquid
<p>Diabetes mellitus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetic devices listed in 94:01.00 of the NIHB DBL • Blood glucose test strips listed in 36:26.00 of the NIHB DBL
<p>Fungal infections of the skin and mucosa, including vaginal candidiasis and oral thrush</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical and vaginal anti-fungals listed in AHFS class 84:04.08 of NIHB DBL excluding ketoconazole shampoo. • Fluconazole 150mg tablet/capsule as a single dose.
<p>Risk of opioid overdose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naloxone 0.4mg/mL one mL injection • Naloxone 1mg/mL one or two mL injection • Naloxone Nasal Spray (USA product pDIN 09991474) • Naloxone kits – two ampules/vials pDIN 09991460 • Naloxone kits – three ampules/vials pDIN 09991488