

### NEW INFORMATION

#### Demerol (meperidine)

Effective July 9, 2013, the listing status for oral and injectable meperidine will change to exclusion. Clients who had NIHB approval for oral meperidine in 30 days preceding July 9, 2013 will continue to be eligible for coverage. The quantity limit of 60 tablets (meperidine 50 mg tablets) in a 30-day period will continue to apply. For these clients only, requests for continued coverage of oral meperidine beyond three (3) months will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

#### Lyrica (pregabalin)

Effective April 30, 2013, Lyrica (pregabalin) was listed on the NIHB Drug Benefit List (DBL) as a limited use benefit. Coverage criteria are as follows: "For the clients with neuropathic pain after failure of a tricyclic antidepressant (TCA) such as amitriptyline OR intolerance/contraindication to a TCA. The Program placed a coverage dose limit of 600 mg/day for pregabalin. This is part of the NIHB Program's prescription drug abuse (PDA) strategy to provide health professionals and clients with alternatives to opioids for the treatment of neuropathic pain.

#### Codeine and Children Under 12

Health Canada's Marketed Health Products Directorate has reviewed the safety of prescription pain and cough medications containing codeine and is no longer recommending their use in children less than 12 years of age.

The NIHB Program provides coverage for codeine as syrup and tablets and in combination with acetaminophen and ASA in products such as Tylenol # 2 and 282s. However, as a result of Health Canada's latest recommendation, effective June 7, 2013, the NIHB Program will no longer provide coverage for codeine or codeine-containing products for children under 12 years of age.

Alternative treatments provided under the NIHB Program:

- For mild to moderate pain, children can be given acetaminophen and ibuprofen, both of which are NIHB benefits. For the treatment of moderate pain in children, morphine is also considered appropriate. Morphine tablets and syrup are both on the Program's Drug Benefit List (DBL).
- Because of previous HC warnings in 2008 and a recommendation from the Program's external expert advisory committee (DTAC), NIHB stopped paying for non-codeine based cough and cold products in July 2011 due to the lack of evidence for use. Non-drug therapies for cough are recommended for children, such as adequate fluid intake and rest.

### Prescribers of methadone and Suboxone

Although new federal and provincial regulations may allow non-physicians to prescribe opioids and other controlled substances such as benzodiazepines, at this time the NIHB Program will cover methadone and buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone) only when prescribed by a physician.

### REMINDERS

#### Updated Drug Benefit List and Drug Benefit List Updates

Health Canada maintains an up-to-date Drug Benefit List (DBL) of NIHB eligible drugs that are to be used in a home or ambulatory setting. The DBL indicates to prescribers and pharmacy providers which drug products are eligible NIHB benefits.

The DBL encourages the most optimal and cost-effective drug therapy for NIHB clients. It is recommended that prescribers and pharmacy providers regularly review the list to ensure they are aware of the drugs eligible for NIHB coverage. The DBL is published annually, and changes made during the year will continue to be communicated via quarterly NIHB DBL Updates. Both the DBL and DBL Updates may be viewed on the NIHB Claims Services Provider Website (select Pharmacy link "Drug Benefit List" or "Benefit Updates").

The 2012 version of the DBL is available on the Health Canada website at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/alt\\_formats/pdf/nihb-ssna/provide-fourmir/pharma-prod/med-list/list\\_drug\\_med\\_2012-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/alt_formats/pdf/nihb-ssna/provide-fourmir/pharma-prod/med-list/list_drug_med_2012-eng.pdf)

#### Price Adjustments for Medications that Require Prior Approval

If there is a discrepancy in price for medications that require a prior approval (PA), the provider must send a copy of the invoice to the Drug Exception Centre (DEC) via fax (1-800-778-4379) referencing the case number. All invoices are subject to review. Should approval at the higher cost be granted, the PA will be adjusted to reflect the changes and a confirmation letter will be sent to the provider. Subsequent requests for the same medication must follow the same process for every new claim.

Please note for medications that are listed as open benefits through the Program, requests for price adjustments must be sent to Express Scripts Canada along with a copy of the invoice for review and consideration.

**NIHB Program and Express Scripts Canada  
Contact Information can be found on the last page of  
this NIHB Newsletter**

## **What to Do When a Medication is on Back Order that Requires Prior Approval**

The NIHB Program will reimburse only the best price, lowest cost alternative product in a group of interchangeable drug products. Pharmacists must follow their provincial/territorial pharmacy legislation/policies to identify interchangeable products and to select the lowest priced brand. If the lowest cost equivalent is not available the provider must phone the Drug Exception Centre (DEC) to obtain a prior approval (PA). The DEC will verify that the product is on back order and a PA will be granted.

Please note for medications that are listed as open benefits through the Program and, are out of stock, the requests for price adjustments must be sent to Express Scripts Canada along with a copy of the invoice for review and consideration.

## **Coverage of Smoking Cessation Products by the NIHB Program**

Some smoking cessation products are covered by the NIHB Program and can be billed directly, but they have quantity and frequency limits. Clients are eligible to receive a 3-month supply of smoking cessation products over a one (1) year period which is renewable 12 months from the day the initial prescription was filled.

## **Units of Measure for Claim Quantities**

In general, claim quantities are the number of units dispensed wherever possible (e.g. number of tablets, capsules, millilitres, grams, etc.). For products that are dispensed in packages (e.g. oral contraceptives, inhalers), submit claim quantities according to your provincial public plan convention. For example, pharmacies in Saskatchewan and Ontario submit inhalers as a package of one (1).

## NIHB PROGRAM AND EXPRESS SCRIPTS CANADA CONTACT INFORMATION

*Please have your Provider Number readily available when contacting the Provider Claims Processing Call Centre*

### EXPRESS SCRIPTS CANADA

#### Provider Claims Processing Call Centre

**Inquiries and Password Resets**  
1-888-511-4666

**Pharmacy Extended Hours**  
Monday to Friday:  
6:30 a.m. to 12 a.m. Eastern Time  
Saturday, Sunday and Statutory Holidays:  
8 a.m. to 12 a.m. Eastern Time

**MS&E Extended Hours**  
Monday to Friday:  
6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Eastern Time  
Excluding Statutory Holidays

#### Pharmacy and MS&E Claims

**Mail Pharmacy claims to:**  
Express Scripts Canada  
NIHB Pharmacy Claims  
P.O. Box 1353, Station K, Toronto, ON M4P 3J4

**Mail MS&E claims to:**  
Express Scripts Canada  
NIHB MS&E Claims  
P.O. Box 1365, Station K, Toronto, ON M4P 3J4

#### Pharmacy/MS&E Provider Agreements

**Fax Completed  
Pharmacy/MS&E Provider Agreements to:**  
**NEW** Toll Free Fax No.: 1-855-622-0669

#### Other Correspondence

**Mail to:**  
Express Scripts Canada  
5770 Hurontario St., 10<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
Mississauga, ON L5R 3G5

#### NIHB Forms

**Download** from the  
NIHB Claims Services Provider Website or contact  
the Provider Claims Processing Call Centre  
[www.provider.express-scripts.ca](http://www.provider.express-scripts.ca)

### NIHB PROGRAM PHARMACY BENEFITS

#### Drug Exception Centre (DEC)

#### PRIOR APPROVALS

##### Pharmacy Benefits

1-800-580-0950 (English)  
1-800-281-5027 (French)  
Fax No.: 1-877-789-4379

#### Health Canada Regional Offices

#### PRIOR APPROVALS

##### MS&E Benefits

Alberta	1-800-232-7301
Atlantic	1-800-565-3294
British Columbia	1-888-299-9222
Manitoba	1-800-665-8507
Northwest Territories/Nunavut	1-888-332-9222
Ontario	1-800-881-3921
Quebec	1-877-483-1575
Saskatchewan	1-866-885-3933
Yukon	1-866-362-6717

#### INQUIRIES

##### Pharmacy/MS&E Benefits

Alberta	1-780-495-2694
	1-800-232-7301
Atlantic	1-902-426-2656
	1-800-565-3294
British Columbia	1-604-666-3331
	1-800-317-7878
Manitoba	1-800-665-8507
Northwest Territories/Nunavut	1-888-332-9222
Ontario	1-800-640-0642
Quebec	1-877-483-1575
	1-514-283-1575
Saskatchewan	1-306-780-8294
	1-866-885-3933
Yukon	1-866-362-6717