FDA advises switching patients now to HFA-propelled albuterol inhalers

CFC-propelled albuterol inhalers are being phased out and will no longer be available after December 31, 2008. The switch from chlorofluorocarbon (CFC)-propelled inhalers to hydrofluoroalkane (HFA)-propelled inhalers is a result of the Clean Air Act and an international environmental treaty on substances that deplete the ozone layer.

HMSA’s formulary currently lists two of the three FDA-approved HFA albuterol inhalers – ProAir HFA and Ventolin HFA, as well as FDA-approved Xopenex HFA (containing levalbuterol) at the generic copayment level for private business plans, Tier 1 for Medicare Part D plans, and Formulary for The HMSA Plan for QUEST Members.

Patient education is important for this transition, as the HFA-propelled inhalers may taste and feel different than the CFC-propelled inhalers. The spray of an HFA-propelled inhaler may feel softer although it contains the same amount of active ingredient. Patients must also prime and clean HFA-propelled inhalers to prevent buildup.

Manufacturers have been increasing production of HFA albuterol inhalers, so an adequate supply is available now.

Formulary additions
The following drugs will have the status of Preferred for HMSA’s private business plans and Formulary for The HMSA Plan for QUEST Members effective July 1, 2008:

Intelence  Isentress
Exelon Patch

Drug status changes
Effective July 1, 2008, the formulary status of a number of drugs has changed, including some medications with high utilization. The status is listed in the following table and in the updates on the back of this page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select</td>
<td>Other Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Other Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUEST</td>
<td>Non-formulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65C Plus</td>
<td>Tier 2 (no change)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact information

Questions or comments regarding HMSA Drug Formulary revisions:
Kris Tsutomi, R.Ph., HMSA Pharmacy Management, P.O. Box 860, Honolulu, HI  96808-0860

Routine claim status and eligibility information can be obtained at http://hhin.hmsa.com and through HMSA Membership Connection (touch-tone eligibility verification) at 948-6244 (Oahu), 1 (800) 552-8507 (Neighbor Islands).

Other nonclinical questions should be directed to:
HMSA Provider Teleservice at 948-6330 (Oahu), 1 (800) 790-4672 (Neighbor Islands)
QUEST Provider Services at 948-6486 (Oahu), 1 (800) 440-0640 (Neighbor Islands)

HMSA member questions or concerns:
Oahu - 948-6111
Hilo - 935-5441
Kona - 329-5291
Kauai - 245-3393
Maui, Lanai, Molokai - 871-6295

QUEST member questions or concerns:
Oahu - 948-6486
Neighbor Islands - 1 (800) 440-0640

Formulary update

The formulary is available through the Hawaii Healthcare Information Network (HHIN) at http://hhin.hmsa.com by clicking on the link to the Provider Resource Center. Formulary changes referred to in this newsletter will not be reflected in the online formulary until the effective date of the changes.

DISCONTINUED DRUGS

Dostinex cabergoline
DHT, Hytakerol dihydrotachysterol
Teslac testolactone
Zyflo zileuton