



# NEWSLETTER

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- TO:** Physicians, Certified Nurse Practitioners/Clinical Nurse Specialists - **For Action Only**  
Providers of Pharmaceutical Services, Independent Clinics, and Health Maintenance Organizations - **For Information Only**
- SUBJECT:** **Retrospective Reviews of Potential Warfarin/Antibiotic Drug-Drug Interactions**
- EFFECTIVE:** Services prescribed on or after March 1, 2001
- PURPOSE:** To notify practitioners that the New Jersey Drug Utilization Review Board (DURB) has recommended that the State implement a retrospective drug utilization review (DUR) program to alert prescribers when a potential drug-drug interaction may exist between warfarin and certain antibiotics.

**BACKGROUND:** In accordance with Public Law (P.L.) 1998, c. 41, the DURB is responsible for developing a retrospective DUR program for State pharmacy benefit programs. The DURB is currently composed of physicians and pharmacists appointed by the Legislature and approved by the Governor.

Using letters to be sent to prescribers, First Health Services, the State's DUR contractor, is hopeful it can assist physicians with identifying potential drug-drug interactions, drug-disease conflicts, or inappropriate dosing of medications. Potential drug-drug interactions between warfarin and certain antibiotics are good examples of where these letters may be helpful to physicians. This is especially true since these interactions may occur 7 to 14 days after both drugs have been in use and it is possible that these drugs may be prescribed by more than one physician.

**ACTION:**

- 1) **Effective for services prescribed on or after March 1, 2001**, First Health Services will send letters to prescribers of warfarin (see attachment) when its review of drug claims indicates that a possible drug-drug interaction may exist between warfarin and certain antibiotics. See items # 3 and # 4 below. First Health will review paid pharmacy claims for Medicaid and Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD) beneficiaries.
- 2) Pharmacists will also receive a response from the State's claims processing system (i.e. Error Code 870) when overlapping claims have been found for warfarin and certain antibiotics.
- 3) Antibiotics that may **increase** warfarin activity include, but may not be limited to, the following:

amoxicillin	erythromycin
ampicillin	loracarbef
azithromycin	metronidazole
cefazolin	minocycline
cefepodoxime	norfloxacin
cephalexin	ofloxacin
chloramphenicol	sparfloxacin
ciprofloxacin	sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim
clarithromycin	tetracycline
doxycycline	vancomycin
drithromycin	

- 4) Antibiotics that may **decrease** warfarin activity include, but may not be limited to, the following:

dicloxacillin  
nafcillin  
rifampin

If you have any questions about this Newsletter, please contact Carl D. Tepper, R.Ph., Chief, Pharmaceutical Services, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, at (609) 588-2724; or **First Health Services at 1-877-888-2939, anytime.**

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