



Newsletter

*Published by the
N.J. Dept. of Human Services
Div. of Medical Assistance & Health Services
& the N.J. Dept. of Health & Senior Services
Div. of Senior Benefits and
Utilization Management*

Volume 11 No. 79

October 2001

TO: Providers of Pharmaceutical Services - **For Action**
Physicians, Dentists, Podiatrists, Certified Nurse Practitioners/
Clinical Nurse Specialists, Optometrists, Independent Clinics, and
Health Maintenance Organizations - **For Information Only**

SUBJECT: **Concurrent Usage of Advair (fluticasone propionate/salmeterol) Diskus and Serevent (salmeterol) or Advair (fluticasone propionate/salmeterol) and Flovent (fluticasone propionate).**

EFFECTIVE: **October 15, 2001**

PURPOSE: To notify providers of pharmaceutical services of severe drug-drug (DD) interactions between Advair Diskus and its component drugs, Serevent and Flovent, when these drugs are utilized concurrently.

BACKGROUND: Advair Diskus is a combination of fluticasone propionate, a long-acting corticosteroid, and salmeterol, a long acting beta-agonist. When patients are utilizing this combination product, they may also request prescriptions for the individual drugs that comprise the Advair product. Based on a retrospective analysis of paid pharmacy claims, a number of cases were identified in which overlapping prescriptions were written.

ACTION: The New Jersey State Drug Utilization Review Board has recommended a severe drug-drug interaction standard that identifies overlapping claims of Serevent and Advair. Pharmacists will be notified of this potential severe drug-drug interaction by the posting of Error Code 869 to overlapping claims for Serevent and Advair. The Medical Exception Process (MEP) will allow an initial 30-day supply of this drug combination to be dispensed. The dispensing of subsequent combinations of these drugs will require prior authorization from First Health Clinical Services. Pharmacists must contact First Health Clinical Services at 1-877-888-2939 to request prior authorization. Pharmacists may refer to Newsletter Volume 9 Number 67, dated November 1999, for additional information concerning the Medical Exception Process.

According to OBRA 1990, pharmacists are responsible for prospective drug review and the proper counseling of patients. When a severe drug-drug interaction occurs, such as that between Advair and Flovent, the pharmacist is required to intervene to determine if the drug combination is medically necessary.

It is important to note that while the combination of Advair and Serevent is considered inappropriate, the use of Advair with Flovent, the other component drug of Advair, may be warranted while the patient's fluticasone (Flovent) dose is being titrated. However, continued utilization of Advair and Flovent by the same patient may not be medically necessary, requiring an intervention between the pharmacist and the patient's physician.

If you have any questions regarding this Newsletter, please contact the Chief Pharmaceutical Consultant, DMAHS, at (609) 588-2724.

If you have any questions concerning the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled, Cystic Fibrosis, Senior Gold or AIDS Drug Distribution Programs, please contact the PAAD Pharmacy Consultant at (609) 631-4887.

**RETAIN THIS NEWSLETTER NUMERICALLY BEHIND THE NEWSLETTER TAB
(BLUE TAB MARKED "5")**