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# Medicaid Alert

MA-2000-02

February 2000

**TO:** Providers of Pharmaceutical Services

**SUBJECT:** Q & As for the Medical Exception (MEP) and Monthly Prescription Volume Threshold (MPTP) Processes

**EFFECTIVE:** Immediately

**PURPOSE:** To give providers of pharmaceutical services responses to commonly asked questions concerning the MEP and MPTP

**ACTION:** For your information, please find below commonly asked questions concerning operational aspects of the MEP and MPTP. Responses from the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS) are provided for each question.

**Q: What information will the pharmacist be required to provide First Health Services when inquiring about a prior authorization (PA)?**

**A:** In order to expedite the PA inquiry process, the pharmacist should have available the following information when contacting First Health during or after normal business hours: the claim internal control number (ICN) which is returned to the pharmacist as part of the point of sale (POS) claim response; the beneficiary identification number, the pharmacy provider number, the prescriber service number (PSN) or name and address of the prescribing physician, the national drug code (NDC) of the prescribed medication; the number of service units and the authorization period being requested. The pharmacist will also be requested to provide the diagnosis for which the drug is being prescribed. If the pharmacist is unaware of the diagnosis, First Health Services will assign an appropriate diagnosis. **The diagnosis will be utilized by the State for reporting purposes only.**

**Q: Must a request for prior authorization be initiated by a licensed pharmacist?**

**A:** All information regarding a prior authorization request for the MEP and/or the MPTP must be exchanged between licensed pharmacists. However, the telephone call may be initiated by non-pharmacist personnel.

**Q: Can a pharmacist request prior authorization for a pharmacy service from First Health Services without having to submit a claim to Unisys for the purpose of receiving a claim denial?**

**A:** Pharmacists can request prior authorization from First Health Services without the need to receive a claim denial from Unisys. This may be necessary in situations where a pharmacist knows a pharmacy service will require PA and wishes to request PA before submitting a claim to Unisys. This was a common practice for requesting PA from the Medicaid District Offices for claims with service dates prior to December 1, 1999.

**Q: Please clarify when it is appropriate to dispense a (6) day emergency supply of medication?**

**A:** For Medicaid, NJ KidCare or General Assistance (GA) prescriptions the pharmacist may dispense up to a six (6) day emergency supply of medication without immediately contacting First Health Services to request authorization. However, when this emergency supply is exhausted by the beneficiary, PA would be required before any additional medication can be dispensed.

For PAAD prescriptions, an emergency situation exists when prior authorization is required from First Health Services and the PAAD beneficiary is out of medication. In these situations, the pharmacist is **required** to contact First Health Services to request prior authorization. The pharmacist must contact First Health at 1-888-852-9031. If the request falls outside of normal business hours, the pharmacist will receive instructions from First Health for contacting their on-call pharmacist to request authorization. **The six (6) day emergency supply accommodation does not apply to PAAD prescriptions.**

**Q: How do I contact First Health Services to request PA after their normal business hours (8 A.M. to 5 P.M.) on evenings and weekends?**

**A:** To request PA after normal business hours, pharmacists may contact First Health Services using the routine PA toll-free telephone number. This telephone number is 877-888-2939. A voice mail answering system will respond to the pharmacist's request. The pharmacist will then be requested to contact the First Health Services' on-call pharmacist at 888-852-9031. The pharmacist will then be requested to enter their pharmacy department telephone number after the voice mail message.

**Q: After receiving a PA number from First Health Services, when will this number be available in POS to allow a pharmacy claim to be considered for payment, e.g. what is the "lag time" for such requests?**

**A:** In most instances, the prior authorization number will be available for claims processing approximately five (5) minutes after the number has been issued by First Health Services.

**Q: Claims denials are experienced after using the PA number issued by First Health Services. Please explain why a pharmacy may be experiencing such denials?**

**A:** The field in the NCPDP claim record for PA consists of twelve (12) numeric positions. In the first numeric position, the pharmacy must transmit the numeric value of "1". In the second numeric position, the pharmacy must enter the numeric value of "0". In the numeric positions of 3-12, the pharmacy must enter the 10-digit prior authorization number issued by First Health Services.

If you have any questions concerning the operational procedures discussed in this Alert, please do not hesitate to contact First Health Services at 1-877-888-2939.

If you have any policy questions concerning this Alert, please do not hesitate to contact the Chief, Pharmaceutical Services at (609) 588-2724.

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