

March 27, 2020

Special Broker Update

State of Ohio Issues New Limitations on Certain Drugs Due to COVID-19

Applies to: Individual; Small Group (1-50); 51-99; 100+; MEWA; All Medicare Business

On March 22, 2020, Governor DeWine authorized the Ohio State Board of Pharmacy to enact [emergency rules](#) that limit access to certain drugs related to the potential treatment of the coronavirus disease known as COVID-19 to only appropriate situations. Limits were placed on the use of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine to prohibit use for either a presumptive positive COVID-19 diagnosis or as a preventive measure. Pharmacists must follow this rule and verify a valid diagnosis before dispensing either of these two medications. They must also limit the quantity to no more than a 14-day supply with no refills allowed.

Medical Mutual's Policy

To support this rule and ensure appropriate access for members who depend on these drugs for the treatment of COVID-19 as well as other conditions, such as malaria, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis, Medical Mutual will be implementing quantity limits on these medications as well as for Kaletra and azithromycin (Zithromax) to prevent stockpiling and inappropriate use. Kaletra is a medication most commonly used for HIV treatment and azithromycin is an antibiotic commonly used for upper respiratory tract infections. Both are increasingly being considered to treat COVID-19.

Exceptions

Members who were using these medications prior to the pandemic will be grandfathered and exempt from these limitations. Furthermore, if there is a legitimate medical reason for receiving larger quantities of these medications, the member's prescriber can contact Express Scripts for a coverage review.

It is important to note that while reports on use of these medications for COVID-19 have been circulating in the media, current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) do not recommend any of the above drugs for treatment of COVID-19. Members with questions should discuss their concerns with their healthcare provider.

As new information becomes available, there may be drugs added to or removed from the quantity limitation program or adjustments made to quantities allowed in order to continue to ensure appropriate use of these critical drugs.