



MONTANA HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS NOTICE

March 17, 2023

All Providers

Effective May 12, 2023

End of Public Health Emergency (PHE)

End of Public Health Emergency (PHE) Effects on Pharmacy Coverage

On February 9, 2023, the State of Montana received notice from the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) would be extended for 90 days. Additionally, the Secretary noted that based on current trends regarding COVID-19, HHS is planning for this to be the final renewal and that the PHE will end on May 11, 2023.

This notice provides guidance on how best to prevent disruptions in medication coverage.

Effective May 12, 2023, with the end of the PHE, the following flexibilities will be discontinued:

1. During the PHE, prior authorizations (PAs), which usually require at least yearly renewal, have been renewed automatically. Beginning May 12, 2023, PAs will no longer be continued without being contacted by the pharmacy or prescriber. This PA rollback will take place over several months.
 - a. **Pharmacists** – Many of these PAs can be completed with a call from the pharmacy to the PA call center before the member arrives at the pharmacy or while they are waiting. Do not contact the prescriber without first calling the PA call center. This will result in unnecessary delays in treatment.
 - b. **Prescribers** – Often these PA renewals require minimal information from your office and can be accomplished with a brief telephone call to the PA call center.
2. During the PHE, members were permitted early refills on non-controlled medications. Early refill flexibilities will be returning to pre-PHE limits. Members must utilize 75% of their prescription prior to refill approval. Controlled substances and gabapentin limits have remained the same at a 90% usage requirement.
3. During the PHE, members were permitted to fill 90 days of all medications, excluding those classified as schedule 2. Specified maintenance medications will continue to pay for a 90-day supply. All other medications will return to a 34-day supply limit. Refer to the Prescription Drug Program Manual on the [Pharmacy page of the Provider Information website](#). (From the Home page, choose Resources by Provider Type, read and accept the End User Agreement, and navigate to the Pharmacy provider type link. Click the drop-down on the Provider Manuals tab to access the manuals.)
4. COVID-19 At Home Test Kits will continue to be covered through September 30, 2024.

Contact and Website Information

Drug Prior Authorization Unit
Mountain-Pacific Quality Health
P.O. Box 5119
Helena, MT 59604
(406) 443-6002 or (800) 395-7961 (Telephone)
(406) 513-1928 or (800) 294-1350 (Fax)

If you have any questions regarding this provider notice, please contact Shannon Sexauer, PharmD, Montana Healthcare Programs Pharmacist at (406) 444-5951 or Shannon.Sexauer@mt.gov, or Dani Feist, Pharmacy Program Officer, at (406) 444-2738 or DFeist@mt.gov.

For claims questions or additional information, contact Montana Provider Relations at (800) 624-3958 or (406) 442-1837 or email Montana.Provider.Relations.Helpdesk.

Visit the [Montana Healthcare Programs Provider Information website](#) to access your provider type page. Choose Resources by Provider Type in the left-hand menu.