

SASKATCHEWAN FORMULARY BULLETIN

Interim Measures Related to Exception Drug Status (EDS) Coverage During COVID-19 Pandemic – *Automatic Extension of EDS Coverage*

The Ministry of Health recognizes that health system challenges resulting from the current COVID-19 pandemic may impact the ability of prescribers, pharmacists and patients to coordinate routine follow-up patient visits or assessments for EDS renewals.

Expiring EDS Coverages:

Effective immediately, to avoid a lapse in EDS coverage, the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch (DPEBB) will automatically extend EDS approval durations. Prescribers and pharmacists are not required to submit an EDS renewal request.

Extension of EDS coverage will occur as follows:

- Most EDS coverages expiring between March 1, 2020, and September 30, 2020, will be automatically extended for six months from the original expiry date (for example, an EDS approval due to expire on May 1, 2020, would be extended to November 1, 2020).
- This extension will occur automatically at least one month prior to the original expiry date.
- **Automatic EDS extension applies** to drugs where it is anticipated the therapy will be long-term. This will include drugs used to treat multiple sclerosis.
- **Automatic EDS extension will not include** drugs associated with short courses of therapy (such as antibiotics) or finite courses as defined in the EDS criteria (such as hepatitis C medications, Lemtrada, etc.).
- Patients receiving an automatic EDS extension will receive a letter with the new coverage dates.
- Prescribers and pharmacists may check the patient's profile on the Pharmaceutical Information Program (PIP) for updated EDS coverage dates.

New EDS Approvals:

Prescribers and pharmacists are asked to submit new EDS requests by fax to 306-798-1089.

In many cases, the duration of new EDS approvals for long-term therapies will be aligned with the extension process described above to avoid expiry over the next six months.

Dispensing pharmacy staff are reminded that automatic Online EDS Adjudication (OEA) is available for select EDS medications, and adjudication should be attempted prior to contacting the DPEBB to prevent an unnecessary manual EDS application or renewal.

The DPEBB extends a **thank you** for your ongoing support and patience during this time. Processes and procedures continue to be reviewed and adapted in response to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please continue to check the Saskatchewan Formulary website, What's New tab (<http://formulary.drugplan.ehealthsask.ca/News>), for updates and information during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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