

# PHARMACY *Update*

October 2015

## Important information for pharmacies...

### New Green Shield Canada (GSC) pharmacy programs and reimbursement practices

GSC is announcing two pharmacy programs and one reimbursement practice change:

- 1) New (and improved) Smoking Cessation Program – coming February 1, 2016
- 2) Pharmacist Health Coaching – available now in eight provinces
- 3) Maintenance Medication Fill limits – coming February 1, 2016

### THE DETAILS...

#### New (and improved) Smoking Cessation Program: what you need to know

GSC first launched our Smoking Cessation Program in 2006, a first-of-its-kind solution that offered plan members an innovative, pharmacist-delivered counselling program, alongside smoking cessation drug therapy.

As part of our broader Change4Life™ health management initiative, GSC recently undertook a comprehensive review of the program, and we have made some important changes based on the most up-to-date evidence of smoking cessation best practices. GSC's new (and improved) Smoking Cessation Program makes it easier for pharmacists to deliver the program and to encourage more patient participation.

#### The Details...

Starting February 1, 2016, we will be expanding GSC's Smoking Cessation Program to more plan sponsors across Canada to increase the availability of the program to their plan members.<sup>1</sup>

The updated program will offer plan members more flexibility to choose how they want to quit smoking:

- They can participate in the pharmacist-delivered counselling sessions and have their smoking cessation drug reimbursed;
- They can participate in the pharmacist-delivered counselling only; OR
- They can have their smoking cessation drug reimbursed without counselling.

---

<sup>1</sup> The program will not be offered to any plan member residing in Alberta or Saskatchewan, or to Ontario residents aged 65 or older (the program is available to Ontario residents who are aged 64 or younger). Plan members in these provinces already have access to provincially funded pharmacy smoking cessation programs.

We are also revamping the Smoking Cessation Program's structure by:

- Increasing the number of counselling sessions from seven to eight over the course of 12 months.
- Establishing product identification number (PIN) codes for each counselling session, with a maximum reimbursement of up to \$125 per plan member per year.
- Allowing plan members the option to start the program at any time during the benefit year (i.e., an "open" benefit period).

To be eligible to deliver GSC's program, you will be required to complete a smoking cessation training program that supports the smoking cessation algorithm (5 A's) of Ask; Advise; Assess; Assist; Arrange. These training programs are available through your provincial pharmacy association, Canadian Pharmacists Association and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

We will be providing more information about GSC's new Smoking Cessation Program, including the applicable PIN codes, a comprehensive pharmacy guide, and other online resources through providerConnect™, our web-based portal for pharmacists and other health care providers.

### **Pharmacist Health Coaching: what you need to know**

Also under the banner of GSC's Change4Life™ initiative, the Pharmacist Health Coaching program is a reimbursed professional pharmacy service designed to help pharmacists empower plan members diagnosed with hypertension and elevated cholesterol to take ownership and responsibility for their overall health by focusing on nutrition, exercise, smoking cessation, drug adherence, and personal health monitoring.

This program is now available to GSC plan members in eight provinces – British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland. And we'll be expanding to Saskatchewan and Quebec very soon.

### **This is how it works...**

Pharmacists who wish to deliver the program complete a training program developed by their professional association in partnership with GSC. Once trained, you will be reimbursed up to \$120 per patient to:

- Provide guidance and support in achieving target blood pressure and cholesterol
- Implement strategies to improve adherence to drug therapy
- Provide coaching to support lifestyle changes that will positively impact cardiovascular and overall health

You and your patient meet one-on-one to complete an initial cardiovascular assessment, including adherence to medication therapy, health history, and lifestyle factors, and then meet again three more times throughout the year for an assessment to review their progress, achievements, and goals.

## **Who's eligible?**

Patients who are:

- Covered for GSC drug benefits
- Under 65 years of age
- Diagnosed with hypertension **and** high cholesterol (taking at least one qualifying drug to treat each condition)

## **Learn more...**

Visit <https://www.providerconnect.ca/HealthCoaching/ProgramInformation.aspx>

## **Maintenance Medication Fill Limits: what you need to know**

Effective February 1, 2016, GSC will limit the number of fills to five per year for a defined list of maintenance drugs. To accomplish this, GSC will be denying claims that are dispensed for less than a three-month supply of the applicable drugs; the response code from the GSC system for these claims will be: **"DR = days supply lower than minimum allowable"**.

A complete list of the drugs included in this new reimbursement policy will be published on GSC's providerConnect website.

## **Why are we doing this?**

Most common maintenance medications are prescribed for a three-month supply, with multiple refills. However, a recent analysis of GSC data has revealed a growing trend towards monthly dispensing of these maintenance medications. This can lead to patient inconvenience, reduced overall adherence to medication therapy and increased drug plan costs.

## **Exceptions...**

Similar to GSC's current Compliance Packaging Policy, the system is set to recognize certain drugs that are taken chronically but should not be dispensed in large quantities (e.g., antipsychotic agents). Also, if the plan member is on five or more maintenance drugs, less than a three-month supply will automatically be allowed by the system.

For any new prescriptions for maintenance medications, the initial dispensing quantity will still be limited to a 30-day supply to provide you with an opportunity to properly assess patient tolerance of the drug. Once tolerance is established, the GSC system will force all future refills to be dispensed in a three-month supply.

For patients that may require more frequent dispensing, due to a cognitive impairment or other issue, pharmacists will be required to submit a form (available on GSC's providerConnect website) outlining the clinical rationale supporting the request. GSC's pharmacy team will review and where appropriate grant an exemption to the policy.