

January 23, 2013

To All BCNU members covered by the PCA,

In the last round of collective bargaining, important changes to the extended health care plan were negotiated. The changes were necessary to ensure ongoing viability of the plan and were reported out to members prior to the ratification of the collective agreement. For more information about why the union agreed to these changes, please see the enclosed bulletin or go to our website.

We are writing you at this time to make sure you have the details of how this change will be implemented. Effective February 1, 2013, the drug portion of the extended health benefits plan will change. Detailed information about the plan is available at <http://www.pac.bluecross.ca/nca/>.

Your extended health care plan will now include a PharmaCare tie-in. Linking drug coverage to the PharmaCare formulary is designed to minimize the impact of rising drug costs by covering only those drugs that are both medically and cost effective. It uses a rigorous, evidence-based process to determine which medications will be covered by the formulary and by Special Authority. For details about how decisions are made by PharmaCare, whether a medication is covered by the formulary or requires Special Authority, you can check online at <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/decision.html> or speak to your doctor.

### **What drugs are covered?**

Reimbursement of prescription drugs purchased from a licensed pharmacy will apply only to those medications approved by BC PharmaCare, unless a Special Authority is granted.

Prescription drugs will continue to be reimbursed based on PharmaCare's Low Cost Alternative (LCA) and Referenced Based Pricing (RBP) restrictions as they were prior to this change. Drug reimbursement continues to be in accordance with the PharmaCare price limit, including maximums for mark up and dispensing fees.

You should let your doctor know about this important change to your drug plan the next time you have a medical appointment.

### **Special Authority Process**

(See enclosed flow sheet)

If you currently take medications that require Special Authority, you must visit your physician and ask them to apply to PharmaCare for the Special Authority on your behalf.

Special Authority forms are available online at <https://www.health.gov.bc.ca/exforms/pharmacare/5328fil.pdf>, from your employer's benefits department, or your physician. A copy of this form is also enclosed.

Once your Physician has completed the form, it must be faxed to the PharmaCare number shown at the top of the form. PharmaCare will review the form during the next 2 - 10 business days and will reply to your Physician with their decision. Your request for the Special Authority drug will either be approved or declined. If approval is provided, you need to send a copy of the letter from PharmaCare to Blue Cross so that it can be entered into their system. This will ensure that you will be able to obtain your medication from a pharmacy using your drug card.

### **What if my medication isn't covered?**

Certain drugs are not eligible for coverage after February 1<sup>st</sup> either because they are not included in the PharmaCare formulary or covered by Special Authority. If you are currently taking medication that is not covered you need to visit your physician to discuss your medication and be prescribed an alternative drug that is eligible under the new plan. Or, you may elect to pay for the medication yourself. In some circumstances you may be eligible for partial coverage for a medication. See drug coverage explanation form enclosed.

### **What if my pharmacy wants to charge me additional fees?**

Find out why your pharmacist is charging you additional fees. You may need to negotiate with your pharmacist to honour the PharmaCare Pricing Model. A better approach is to research pharmacies in your area to ensure that they comply with the terms of your new drug plan.

Pharmacy Compass may also be of assistance in helping you compare the prices at different pharmacy locations across BC. You can access this resource at: <http://www.pac.bluecross.ca/Corp/howbenefitswork/getthemoost/pharmacy-compass.aspx>

If you have questions specifically related to your coverage, please contact Pacific Blue Cross at 604-419-2600. For all other enquiries, please contact BCNU at 604-433-2268 or Toll Free at 1-800-663-9991 or email [pharmacare@bcnu.org](mailto:pharmacare@bcnu.org).

Yours truly,

**Lara Acheson**

Director of Disability Management and Occupational Health and Safety