

SASKATCHEWAN FORMULARY BULLETIN

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

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

In follow-up to the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch (DPEBB), Formulary Bulletin #194 from December 15, 2020, regarding the automatic extension of EDS coverage, the DPEBB will continue to automatically extend EDS approval durations until September 30, 2021. Prescribers and pharmacists are not required to submit an EDS renewal request for most long-term medications during this automatic EDS extension period. The Drug Plan continues to reassess the need for automatic EDS extensions, as well as other listing changes as a result of COVID-19, and will notify prescribers and pharmacists of any updates accordingly.

Extension of EDS coverage will occur as follows:

- Most EDS coverages expiring between July 1, 2021, and September 30, 2021, will be automatically extended for six months from the expiry date (for example, an EDS approval due to expire on August 1, 2021, would be extended to February 1, 2022).
- This extension will occur one month prior to the 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.).
- Prescribers and pharmacists may check the Pharmaceutical Information Program viewer for the patient's updated EDS coverage dates.
- Individuals may contact the Drug Plan for a copy of their EDS extension letter.

New EDS Approvals:

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

Prior to contacting the Drug Plan with a request for EDS, dispensing pharmacy staff are reminded to submit claims for adjudication, if the drug is listed in Appendix A for possible Online EDS Adjudication.

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.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Health
Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch
2nd Floor, 3475 Albert St
REGINA SK S4S 6X6
306-787-3317
1-800-667-7581

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