

## COVID-19: Frequently Asked Questions

*Prescription drugs are essential to the health and well-being of hundreds of millions of Americans. During this time of public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) are taking action to help the patients we serve stay safely at home through convenient, reliable access to their needed prescription drugs, plus the vital clinical services and supports to see them through this difficult time. By balancing access – such as through home delivery – with the aim to help alleviate or minimize patient impacts resultant of a strain on the pharmaceutical supply chain, PBMs are facilitating access to needed prescription drugs now and in the days ahead.*

*Below are frequently asked questions of PBMs on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).*

### **1. Can I get extra supply of my maintenance medications and other essential prescription drugs?**

As patients evaluate their prescription drug needs, PBMs are providing patient care management services and other supports, and encouraging patients to consult government [guidance](#) and, as needed, their health care providers on whether extra supply on hand is necessary and safe. Following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advice, patients may wish to have an up-to-date supply of most maintenance medications. Others may opt for mail-service pharmacy, at the time a refill is needed, to access medications safely while being able to stay at home.

Patients with questions about their prescription drug coverage, including early refill policies, should contact their prescription drug plan customer service department through the toll-free number on the back of their prescription drug card. Please note that your prescription drug coverage may differ based on your health plan and whether you are covered under Medicare, Medicaid, an employer-sponsored health plan, or commercial health plan. In addition, please note that specific conditions may apply depending on the type of prescription drug (e.g., for controlled substances), as well as other circumstances.

### **2. Can I get my medications delivered to my home so I don't have to go out?**

PBMs are committed to helping the patients we serve practice social distancing and stay at home safely with convenient, reliable access to their needed prescription drugs. PBMs recognize that home delivery can provide an alternative way of safely accessing needed maintenance medications and other essential prescription drugs. Some PBMs, in partnership with health plans and pharmacies, are making home delivery more accessible. If you would like to inquire about receiving your maintenance medications to be delivered by mail, call the prescription drug plan customer service department through the toll-free number on the back of your prescription drug card.

### **3. If I get my drugs delivered, can I do it without having to interact with the delivery person?**

Because of the current transmission risk posed by COVID-19 to patients, pharmacy professionals, and mail carriers alike, signature requirements for home delivery often are being waived, unless legally required. PBMs also are working to get federal agencies, states, and other health care stakeholders to temporarily waive signature requirements to keep Americans, pharmacy professionals, and mail carriers safe.

#### **4. Will there be coverage of prescription drugs for the treatment of COVID-19?**

Currently, there is no specific treatment or vaccine for COVID-19. Patients with COVID-19 should receive care from their health care provider to help relieve symptoms as they would other viral respiratory infections. PBMs are continuously and closely monitoring COVID-19 developments, including emerging treatments. When the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approves treatments for COVID-19, PBMs, working with their health plan clients, will facilitate coverage as appropriate.

#### **5. What's being done to try to prevent prescription drug shortages?**

PBMs are working with other health care stakeholders and federal, state, and local government partners to sustain access to care for patients and prevent drug shortages. As part of these efforts, PBMs support clinical guidance for health care providers that balances patients' need to stay at home, the clinical appropriateness of supply for any given drug, and the need to prevent future drug shortages. We all have an important role in preventing drug shortages. Together, we can make sure patients have convenient, reliable access – such as through home delivery and additional supply on hand – to their essential prescription drugs now and in the days ahead.

#### **6. What can I expect if there are drug shortages for my maintenance medication or treatments for COVID-19?**

The FDA has been closely monitoring the drug supply chain for potential disruptions to supply or shortages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through their essential and leading role in monitoring the safety and resiliency of the drug supply chain, the FDA has been in regular communication with more than 180 manufacturers since late January alone to evaluate their entire supply chain, including active pharmaceutical ingredients, finished dose forms, and any components that may be impacted in any area of the supply chain due to the pandemic.

Even with this important ongoing work, many Americans are worried about shortages for their maintenance medications and other essential prescription drugs. If a shortage for a specific medication does occur, PBMs will work with the patient, their prescriber, and their health plan to identify a covered therapeutic substitute and help minimize patient impact caused by a shortage.

#### **7. What else are PBMs doing to address and help respond to COVID-19?**

In addition to taking action to facilitate patients' access to essential prescription drugs during the COVID-19 pandemic, PBMs are recommending and adopting, in partnership with our employer and health plan clients, a range of approaches to sustain access to needed prescription drugs:

- To help facilitate access to our nation's nearly 70,000 retail pharmacies, PBMs are actively providing information to RxOpen, a central hub created after Hurricane Katrina to help promote uniform, consistent supply-chain information is provided to stakeholders;
- To improve health outcomes for all Americans, PBMs are partnering with organizations in the health care industry on private and public sector actions to help Americans receive the care they need;
- To help support patients with specific questions and concerns, including assistance in assessing their prescription drug benefits, PBMs are providing toll-free customer support lines, staffed by a dedicated team of professionals trained in COVID-19 and related questions; and
- To minimize impacts on patient care associated with drug shortages, PBMs are leading cross-industry collaboration, including with pharmaceutical manufacturers, pharmacies, hospitals, and health plans, to facilitate Americans' continued access to a safe, effective, and reliable supply of prescription drugs.