

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Department of Health Care Finance



Office of the Senior Deputy Director/Medicaid Director

Transmittal # 20-11

**TO:** DC Medicaid Prescribers and Pharmacy Providers

**FROM:** Melisa Byrd  
Senior Deputy Director/ Medicaid Director

**DATE:** March 20, 2020

**SUBJECT:** **Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Emergency Authorization of a 90-day supply for maintenance medications and 30- day supply for non-maintenance medications**

---

The purpose of this transmittal is to inform prescribers and pharmacy providers of the District of Columbia Medicaid & Alliance Programs that in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DHCF authorizes a 90-day supply of maintenance medications and a 30-day supply for non-maintenance medications.

COVID-19 was declared a Public Health Emergency by Mayor Muriel Bowser on March 11, 2020. On February 28, 2020, the D.C. Office of the Mayor issued an Order to prepare District government agencies for the potential impacts of COVID-19. On March 2, 2020, Mayor Bowser released a Coronavirus Update urging all District residents to check on their regular prescription drugs to make sure they have an adequate supply, and to refill their prescriptions as needed.

In addition, the DC Council on March 17, 2020 passed the “COVID-19 Response Emergency Amendment Act of 2020” (D.C. Law A23-0247, Expires on Jun 15, 2020), allowing individuals licensed to practice pharmacy to authorize and dispense a refill of patient prescription medications prior to the expiration of the waiting period between refills, to allow District residents to maintain an adequate supply of necessary medication during a period of time for which the Mayor has declared a public health emergency pursuant to section 5a of the District of Columbia Public Emergency Act of 1980, effective October 17, 2002 (D.C. Law 14-194; D.C. Official Code § 7-2304.01).

**90-DAY SUPPLY OF MAINTENANCE MEDICATIONS**

Covered outpatient drugs in the therapeutic categories listed as [maintenance medications](http://www.dc-pbm.com/) (<http://www.dc-pbm.com/>) will be available to FFS Medicaid beneficiaries for a 90-day supply.

- **For prescribers:** Prescribers may write prescriptions for maintenance medications for a quantity equivalent to a 90-day supply.
- **For pharmacies:** Pharmacies may dispense up to a 90-day supply of a prescription drug if requested by a DHCF beneficiary or that beneficiary's prescriber provided sufficient quantity remains on the prescription to support the quantity being filled. This policy applies to maintenance medications only.
  - If a pharmacist believes that dispensing up to a 90-day supply of any drug not covered by the policy would be in the best interest of a beneficiary, for FFS beneficiaries they may call the Magellan Pharmacy Call Center at 1-800-273-4962 to request an override.
  - If deemed appropriate in the pharmacist's professional judgement, the days' supply dispensed (e.g. 30-day supply with 11 refills vs. 90-day supply with 3 refills) may be changed without consultation only for maintenance medications.

In the case of drug classes where a change in days' supply may cause clinical concern, DHCF recommends that prescribers be consulted upon initiation of new therapy and for any changes.

**For MCO beneficiaries:** Pharmacy providers who render services for MCO beneficiaries should follow instructions provided by each MCO/Pharmacy Benefit Manager regarding filling/refilling of a 90-day supply prescription. Each MCO can also provide further clarifications regarding filling/refilling of a 90 day supply of prescription or any other concerns or questions that the pharmacy may have.

### **BENEFICIARY CO-PAYMENT OPTIONS**

For FFS beneficiaries who express having a financial hardship and cannot pay for their medication(s), pharmacists can waive the copay(s) using the applicable codes during the process of submitting the prescription claim to the Pharmacy Benefit Manager (Magellan).

### **PHARMACY REIMBURSEMENT**

DC FFS Medicaid enrolled pharmacies submitting electronic pharmacies claims for 90-day supply quantities for FFS beneficiaries will be reimbursed for the ingredient cost using the FFS Medicaid "lesser of" pricing methodology but will receive only one (1) professional dispensing fee of \$11.15 per claim.

### **EARLY REFILL FOR 30 DAY SUPPLY FOR NON-MAINTENANCE MEDICATIONS**

Effective March 6, 2020, FFS Medicaid beneficiaries may, upon request, receive up to a 30-day advanced supply of non-maintenance prescription medication(s). Upon beneficiary request to a participating pharmacy, the pharmacy may contact the Magellan Pharmacy Call Center at 1-800-273-4962 to request an override.

**For MCO beneficiaries:** Pharmacies should follow instructions provided by the beneficiary's MCO Pharmacy Benefit Manager for dispensing 30-day advanced supplies of prescription drugs.

If you have any questions or have any problems with obtaining medication after the change goes into effect, please contact the Division of Clinician, Pharmacy, and Acute Provider Services: Charlene Fairfax, Senior Pharmacist at (202) 442-9076 or e-mail: [charlene.fairfax@dc.gov](mailto:charlene.fairfax@dc.gov); Gidey Amare, Pharmacist at (202) 442-5952 or e-mail: [gidey.amare@dc.gov](mailto:gidey.amare@dc.gov); Jonas Terry, Pharmacist at (202) 478-1415 or e-mail: [jonas.terry@dc.gov](mailto:jonas.terry@dc.gov); or Magellan (Pharmacy Benefit Manager) at 1-800-273-4962.

cc: Medical Society of the District of Columbia  
DC Hospital Association  
DC Primary Care Association  
DC Health Care Association  
DC Home Care Association  
DC Behavioral Health Association  
DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers