

Effective 01/01/2014
Xopenex[®] HFA (levalbuterol) moves to PA Required
Proair[®] HFA (albuterol) and Proventil[®] HFA (albuterol) are Preferred
Short-Acting Beta-Agonist Inhalers on PDL

November 25, 2013

Dear Pharmacy Provider:

Seven years ago we informed you through a mailing that Xopenex[®] HFA (levalbuterol tartrate) would become the sole and exclusive short-acting beta-agonist inhaler on the Preferred Drug List (PDL) for the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA). At that time, there was much uncertainty in the availability and cost of inhalers within the short-acting beta agonist class. To date, this formulary change has resulted in approximately 2.4 million dollars in savings to the State of Vermont. Last year, Proair[®] HFA and Proventil[®] HFA were moved to a preferred position in order to provide more options. Today we are writing to let you know that the financial marketplace has significantly changed, and Xopenex[®] HFA will be moving to a non-preferred position on the PDL effective 1/1/2014.

As you are aware, clinical evidence supports a level of efficacy and safety that is comparable between albuterol and levalbuterol. Current clinical guidelines do not prefer one short-acting beta agonist (SABA) over another.^{1,2}

There will be no grandfathering, therefore effective **1/1/2014** all prescriptions for Xopenex[®] HFA will reject for prior authorization. We recognize that this change may have significant implications for prescribers, patients and pharmacies. All recent prescribers of Xopenex[®] HFA have already been alerted to this impending change and have been asked to switch patients to our preferred products.

HOW CAN YOU ASSIST WITH THIS TRANSITION?

We encourage you to outreach to prescribers and educate them on the need to switch their patients to either Proair[®] HFA or Proventil[®] HFA as you receive requests for new or refill prescriptions for Xopenex[®] HFA inhalers. As a reminder, between now and the end of the year, you will also receive a message about the upcoming change on all paid claims for Xopenex[®] HFA.

If you would like to receive a list of all your patients currently filling claims for Xopenex[®] HFA, please contact our on-site Catamaran Account Coordinator, Michelle Sirois at 1-802-879-5940.

If you have questions related to this change in benefit coverage, please feel free to contact our on-site Catamaran Clinical Consultant, Diane Neal, R.Ph, at 1-802-879-5605.

Thank you for your continued support of the State of Vermont's clinical pharmacy programs.

Sincerely,



Nancy Hogue, Pharm.D.
Director of Pharmacy Services

1. FitzGerald M, Bateman ED, Boulet LP, Cruz AA, Haahtela T, Levy ML et al. Global Initiative for Asthma. Global Strategy for Asthma Management and Prevention (guideline on the Internet). 2012. Available from: www.ginasthma.org. Accessed October 23, 2013.

2. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Expert Panel Report 3: Guidelines for the diagnosis and management of asthma (guideline on the Internet). NHLBI 2007. Available from <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/asthgdln.htm>. Accessed October 23, 2013.