

New Specialty Pharmacy Provider Effective February 1, 2012 Ascend[®] Specialty Pharmacy

January 4, 2012

Dear Prescriber,

The Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) strives to work collaboratively with you to help improve your patients' access to quality healthcare. This letter is to inform you of changes that we are implementing for our members taking certain specialty drugs. Through our partnership with MedMetrics Health Partners, the DVHA is changing its specialty pharmacy provider to **Ascend Specialty Pharmacy (Ascend)** from ICORE Healthcare (ICORE) for certain specialty drugs. Beginning February 1st, 2012, all of your patients with primary prescription drug benefit coverage through Vermont's publicly funded programs must obtain their specialty medications from Ascend if previously obtained from ICORE. Ascend is located in South Portland, Maine, and has been dedicated to the delivery and management of specialty drugs since 1994. A team of Patient Care Coordinators is available to make this transition easy for you, your staff, and your patients. Ascend offers free clinical support and education for beneficiaries and their families. In addition, their New England location will enhance the efficiency of shipping drugs, particularly in the winter when ground, rather than air shipping services can be utilized.

A letter is being mailed to all beneficiaries currently taking these specialty medications to explain this transition. This fax is providing you with preliminary notification, and we will follow up with a letter and your patient roster with more detail about the process within the next week.

Ascend will call your office for any further information needed on established patients and will contact your patients to schedule delivery. This change does not affect our prior authorization (PA) process (if required), nor will your patient require a new PA (unless authorization has expired) as part of this pharmacy switch. At this time, only medication classes currently dispensed through ICORE will be dispensed by Ascend.

Updated Patient Enrollment/Prescription Order/Prior Authorization Request forms are available for download from our website at: <http://dvha.vermont.gov/for-providers/pharmacy-prior-authorization-request-forms>. Beginning on 2/1/2012, please use these forms for new patients and discard any older forms with ICORE phone/fax numbers. For new patients please **fax** your completed form (containing the PA request if needed) to Ascend at **1-800-218-3221**, who will forward the PA request to MedMetrics. It is important that PA requests be submitted via FAX, rather than phone, to ensure that all the essential information is captured to provide the best possible service for your patient. All PA requests will continue to be reviewed by the MedMetrics Prescriber Clinical Call Center staff, and you will continue to receive notification of PA request status by MedMetrics Health Partners. While new patients must utilize Ascend beginning 2/1/2012, established patients may continue to refill medications at ICORE until 2/15/2012 if they so choose.

We value the care you provide to our beneficiaries and thank you in advance for your cooperation in working with us during this transition. If you have any questions regarding these changes, please contact our on-site MedMetrics' Clinical Account Manager, Diane Neal, R.Ph, at 1-802-879-5605 or Ascend directly at **1-866-843-3604**.

Sincerely,

Nancy Hogue, Pharm.D.
Director of Pharmacy Services

