

PharmaCare Tie-in for Drug Coverage for Nurses Bargaining Association (NBA) Members in effect February 1, 2013



New PharmaCare tie-in for Nurses Bargaining Association members takes effect on February 1, 2013, integrating BCNU extended benefits drug coverage with the BC PharmaCare list of approved drugs.

- Prescription drugs are the fastest growing area of health expenditure, causing employers to demand employees share the cost of benefit plans. BCNU benefits remain 100% employer-paid (alone among nurses' unions in Canada) enabled by accepting the PharmaCare tie-in. To date, ninety percent of BCNU healthcare workers have opted for the tie-in.

PharmaCare tie-in supports effective use of healthcare system resources

- PharmaCare lists a broad array of name-brand and generic drugs, but favours generic (cheaper) versions when two companies make medically equivalent drugs.
- Using PharmaCare formulary reduces the costs of prescription medications - and allows us to shift costs from our benefit plan to PharmaCare; many drug costs will now be paid by PharmaCare due to the tie-in.
- PharmaCare tie-in maintains access to medically effective drugs, only substituting generics for brand-names if proven effective.

What it means for you

- Most members, who occasionally have a prescription filled or already use generic drugs included in the formulary, will notice no difference.
- Members currently prescribed brand-name drugs that are not listed on the PharmaCare list can ask their doctor to request Special Authority for medical reasons. On rare occasions when neither a brand-name drug nor its generic equivalent is available, your doctor can also request Special Authority.
- Anyone wanting to purchase a brand-name drug instead of a listed generic can do so by paying the difference out of pocket.
- If you are currently taking prescription medications under extended benefits, you should advise your doctor of the PharmaCare tie-in as soon as possible.

Comprehensive information is in the mail to all NBA members and detailed information is available on the BCNU website (under Hot Topics) or log in to CaresNet on the Pacific Blue Cross website.