

Anthem Covering Nexium Beginning January 1, 2009 / Other Coverage Changes Ahead For PPI Class

McGohan Brabender has learned of the following updates from Anthem:

**Anthem states that the information below applies only to individuals and groups that have renewed or will renew with a benefit exclusion that excludes coverage of certain prescription medications in drug classes with clinically equivalent alternatives. For information on PPI coverage changes for groups that have opted out of this benefit exclusion or where member certificate language does not support the benefit exclusion, please see the box at the end of this message.*

Anthem states that according to the American College of Gastroenterology, more than 60 million Americans experience heartburn at least once per month. About 25 million adults suffer from heartburn on a daily basis. Medications to treat heartburn are one of the most commonly prescribed types of medications. These medications - which fall into the Proton Pump Inhibitor (PPI) class and include Nexium[®], Prevacid[®] and Protonix[®], among others - are important to member health.

Based on a recent pricing change that impacts the overall value of these medications, effective January 1, 2009, Nexium will be added to Anthem's formulary, and Protonix and omeprazole 40mg will no longer be covered.

Members will have a choice of effective, clinically equivalent acid reflux medications, including Nexium, Prevacid, omeprazole 10 mg and omeprazole 20mg. Both the omeprazole 10 mg and omeprazole 20mg will be available at the generic formulary/Tier 1 copayment.

In making this change, Anthem states that they considered that:

- Nexium is one of the most commonly prescribed medications for the treatment of acid reflux, indigestion and heartburn.
- Research has determined that all PPIs offer clinically equivalent treatment and symptom relief.
- The PPI coverage strategy is designed to give members a choice of medications that are effective and offer the best value.
- Management of this highly utilized drug class contributes to the goal of keeping the overall cost of health care affordable.

PPIs that will be covered:

Drug Name	Coverage Tier
omeprazole 10mg, omeprazole 20mg	Tier 1
Nexium, Prevacid	Tier 2
None	Tier 3

PPIs that will be excluded from coverage:

Drug Name
Aciphex®
Prilosec®
Protonix
Zegerid®
omeprazole 40mg
pantoprazole

Please note: For groups that have not yet renewed with the clinically equivalent drug exclusion change, Nexium will be a covered drug effective January 1, 2009. Protonix and omeprazole 40mg will be included in the list of excluded medications upon renewal.

Anthem states they are working to spread the word about this change, so members can make a smooth transition.

- Upon request, employer groups will receive a letter from them regarding the coverage changes 30-45 days prior to the implementation date.
- Members who have a prescription claim for pantoprazole, omeprazole 40mg or Protonix in the last 12 months will receive a letter 30 days prior to the implementation date. This letter will explain the coverage change and suggest other covered medications the member may wish to discuss with the prescribing physician.
- Doctors will be alerted through Anthem's usual communication channels, so they can talk to patients about switching to a covered drug or over-the-counter options.
- Pharmacies will be alerted in December through the network pharmacy newsletter and other communication channels.

The table below summarizes PPI coverage changes for groups that have opted out of the benefit exclusion of clinically equivalent alternatives:

PPI Drug	Coverage Tier
omeprazole 10mg, omeprazole 20mg, omeprazole 40mg*, pantoprazole*	Tier 1
Nexium, Prevacid	Tier 2
Aciphex, Prilosec, Zegerid, Protonix	Tier 3

**omeprazole 40mg and pantoprazole will require prior authorization*

Should you have any questions, please contact your McGohan Brabender Account Representative at (800) 293-2347.