

Statements from the PASSEs Regarding the Dispensing of Name Brand Drugs vs. Cheaper Generic Versions

Empower Healthcare Solutions:

“Empower actively monitors Rx utilization trends and has noted increased utilization and cost associated with brand name Lamictal (now ranked as #3 in drug cost for Empower) since this change occurred on the Medicaid Preferred Drug List (PDL) in April this year. We also understand the challenges shared by pharmacies as the point-of-sale margin on generic is likely much better than the brand. Because PASSEs are required to follow the Medicaid PDL, Empower will continue to administer the PDL definitions of preferred and non-preferred medications accordingly. However, the use of non-preferred generics are approved when clinically appropriate so we also want to preserve provider option to prescribe/dispense generics as needed. In response to this particular issue, Empower will immediately revisit staff training to ensure providers receive quick/consistent support through the prior authorization process and receive approval for non-preferred Rx options when appropriate. In addition, Empower will submit for DHS review/approval a streamlined, point-of-sale approval process for this non-preferred drug. Once implemented, this will enable pharmacists to receive immediate authorization to dispense the generic option of this medication through the point-of-sale process without any delay.”

CareSource:

“CareSource PASSE is bound by the PASSE agreement with DHS to follow the DHS Preferred Drug List. For this drug, the brand name is the preferred agent sent to us by DHS. CareSource PASSE has discussed this topic with its Pharmacy Advisory Board in a recent meeting. The costs of requiring independent pharmacies to continue to carry the substantially more expensive brand drug is shared by CareSource PASSE in our costs. CareSource PASSE is committed to making affordable, generic based options available to help offset those inventory costs while still providing choice and options for the Arkansans served in the PASSE program. Removing the authorization requirements on generic Lamictal tablet is something we will continue to engage with DHS on. At this time, if a pharmacy is out of stock on brand Lamictal, CareSource PASSE will provide a one-time override for generic tablets. We hope this will allow pharmacies to immediately take care of the needs of their patients while providing time to order the brand into inventory until another agreeable outcome is hopefully reached.”

Summit Community Care:

“Summit Community Care is required by its PASSE agreement with the Arkansas Department of Human Services to follow the Department’s Preferred Drug List (PDL) rules. If the Department prefers a branded product over the generic, Summit Community Care is required to follow the Department’s guidance. However, in instances where the State’s preferred brand is not clinically appropriate for a patient (e.g. the patient’s doctor has indicated the preferred brand is contraindicated for the patient or has indicated that the patient is allergic to a nonactive ingredient, etc.), the patient’s provider may submit a prior authorization for the generic medication and the request will be reviewed for clinical appropriateness. Additionally, exceptions may be made on a case by case basis where brand availability is limited. For example, if a pharmacy were to notify Summit that Lamictal is unavailable, Summit may authorize the pharmacy to dispense the non-preferred, generic medication. This quick approval process occurs at the plan level and the pharmacy may obtain the approval by contacting the member’s care coordinator or the plan’s pharmacy manager directly. This process is in place to ensure that our members have immediate access to needed medications. Summit Community Care is committed to continue to work with the Department of Human Services around the State’s authorization requirements around generic medications.”

Arkansas Total Care:

No Response