



# Great-West Life DRUGSOLUTIONS

Innovative **Prescription Drug Management** from Great-West Life

## Prescription drug claim process changes: what they mean to you

Prescription drug costs are a rapidly growing segment of total Canadian healthcare costs, funded largely through employee benefit plans or directly out of patients' pockets. While Great-West Life is making changes to claims processes to help curb this cost growth, we are committed to maintaining coverage for appropriate and effective healthcare treatment and recovery – not reducing coverage.

This document outlines important changes to Great-West's claims practices for prescription drugs, and what they mean to you. Please keep this information with your benefits plan documents.

### Enhanced Generic Substitution\*

Many brand name drugs have generic equivalents, which are often available at a substantially lower cost. Health Canada regulates all generic drugs sold in the country to ensure they contain the identical medicinal ingredients as their brand name counterparts. However, many patients continue to choose brand name drugs over generic drugs.

**Enhanced Generic Substitution** means when a claim for a brand name drug is submitted, reimbursement will be based on the cost of the generic drug (if that cost is lower).

With Great-West's *Enhanced Generic Substitution*, coverage will be based on the cost of the lowest-priced interchangeable drug with the same medicinal ingredients, unless a plan member provides medical evidence that a prescribed drug cannot be substituted. A *Request for Brand Name Drug Coverage* form signed by your doctor and outlining the health reason the brand name drug is necessary will be required in these cases. The form can be found at [www.greatwestlife.com](http://www.greatwestlife.com) under Client Services – Group Benefits Plan Members – Forms.

\*only applicable to groups with Great-West's pay-direct or deferred drug card



## Health Case Management

New drug treatments and breakthroughs are helping Canadians with conditions once thought to be untreatable. But with the cost of some of these medications ranging between \$30,000 and \$500,000 per year, many Canadians are unable afford them without the help of a group benefits plan.

Great-West is working hard to ensure that your benefits plan is sustainable while also providing coverage for effective treatment. Monitoring and managing treatment plans can achieve better health outcomes without incurring unnecessary costs.

**Health Case Management** is a program that allows Great-West to work with patients who require a complex treatment plan and their doctors to better understand the treatment plan and identify opportunities for support, education and assistance. Here's how *Health Case Management* can make a difference:

- **Assessing treatment plan effectiveness**  
Ensuring that treatment plans are well understood and working effectively can improve a patient's health outcome. A health case manager will work with patients and their doctors to understand and assess the effectiveness of a treatment plan (applies to new claims only).
- **Providing support services**  
Not all benefit plans offer the same coverage. A health case manager can help patients access and understand any benefits or programs available under their plans.
- **Ensuring medication is taken as directed**  
Patients taking certain high cost specialty drugs are 2.5 times more likely to become disabled.<sup>1</sup> Taking medication properly is important to ensuring the effectiveness of a treatment plan. Health case managers can help keep patients on track.
- **Monitoring medications for a trial period**  
Clinical trials show some medications may only work for 25 per cent of patients who take them. Through *Health Case Management*, a drug may be approved for a trial period to determine its effectiveness.
- **Providing consistency of treatment through designated providers**  
Great-West may contract with third party experts to help assess, manage and dispense certain drugs that require prior authorization to help ensure consistency in treatment.

*Health Case Management* is initiated when needed through Great-West's prior authorization process. Forms can be found at [www.greatwestlife.com](http://www.greatwestlife.com) under Client Services – Group Benefits Plan Members – Forms.

## Your health comes first

Although some *Health Case Management* services will be made available to individuals who are currently taking medications that require prior authorization, we will not recommend altering ongoing treatments that are already established. Your health comes first, and if you are stable on your current treatment plan, a health case manager will not suggest any change.

Our drug claim process changes are just one example of how Great-West is working to keep drug plans affordable for plan sponsors – and helping maintain your coverage now and into the future.

<sup>1</sup> Great-West high cost drug and disability claim analysis, 2011



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