Drug Quantity Management — Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

1. What is drug quantity management?
Drug quantity management is a program that makes sure patients are using medications at doses that have been proven effective. It provides the medication you need for good health and the health of your family while making sure you receive them in the amount – or quantity – considered safe.

For example, your doctor might write a prescription for two 20mg pills once a day. If the medication is available as a 40mg pill, you would need just one a day. Asking your doctor to prescribe the 40mg strength can save you and your plan money.

Drugs that aren’t easily measured, like nose sprays and inhalers, are frequently included in the program. U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines recommend the maximum quantities of these drugs that are proven to be safe and effective.

DQM also lets the pharmacist know if you ask for a refill when you should still have medicine left from the last time you filled the prescription.

2. Who decides what drugs are included in the program?
Your prescription plan decides which medicines are covered. To develop program recommendations, Express Scripts follows guidelines developed by the FDA. Your plan may consider these recommendations when determining coverage.

How Drug Quantity Management Works

4. Why couldn’t I get the amount of medication that was prescribed?
When you submit a prescription that applies to the program, your pharmacist should see a note in the system indicating that your medication isn’t covered for the amount prescribed. This could mean:

- You’ve asked for a refill too soon; that is, you should still have medication left from your last supply. If this happens, just ask your pharmacist when it will be time to get a refill. OR
- Your doctor wrote a prescription for a quantity larger than your plan covers. If the quantity is too large you can choose one of these options:
  - Have your pharmacist fill your prescription as it’s written, for the amount that your plan covers. You will pay the appropriate copayment, but you may need to fill this prescription more often — for instance, twice a month instead of once a month — which means you pay more often.
  - Ask your pharmacist to call your doctor. They can discuss changing your prescription to a higher strength, if one is available. In most cases, if your doctor approves this change, you will have fewer copayments because you will receive your prescription just once a month.
  - If your doctor doesn’t agree with the limit, he or she can request prior authorization, which may allow you to receive the original amount and strength prescribed. Your doctor can visit the Express Scripts online portal at esrx.com/PA to request prior authorization.

5. Does this program deny me access to the medication I need?
No. Your drug quantity management program gives you access to the prescription drugs you need in quantities that follow your plan’s guidelines for safe, economical use.

You’re encouraged to have your prescriptions filled according to the guidelines your plan uses. A list of the medications included in your program is available. Ask your HR administrator for a copy, and show this list to your doctor.
6. I need my prescription filled immediately. What can I do?
Your pharmacist can fill your prescription as it’s written, for the quantity your plan covers. Remember, although you pay your plan’s copayment, the quantity you receive might not last a full month.

Ask your pharmacist to call your doctor about changing your prescription to a higher strength, if one is available. This way you could get a month’s supply for the plan’s copayment. You could also ask your pharmacist to call your doctor about requesting a prior authorization.

7. What happens if my doctor’s request for a prior authorization is denied?
You can have your prescription filled for the quantity covered by your plan and continue to pay your plan’s copayment each time you get a refill. Or your doctor can change your prescription to a higher strength of your medication, if one is available, so that you get a month’s supply at a time.

Home Delivery and Drug Quantity Management

8. I sent in a prescription for home delivery, but I was contacted and told it’s in a drug quantity management program. What happens now?
The Express Scripts PharmacySM tries to contact your doctor to suggest either changing your prescription to a higher strength or asking for a prior authorization. If the pharmacists don’t hear back from your doctor within two days, they will fill your prescription for the quantity covered by your plan. To save time, you may want to let your doctor know that the Express Scripts Pharmacy will be calling.

If a higher strength isn’t available, or your plan doesn’t provide a prior authorization for a higher quantity, the Express Scripts Pharmacy can fill your prescription for the quantity that your plan covers.