



STATE OF OKLAHOMA  
OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

January 3, 2003

Dear Pharmacy Provider,

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority has changed the criteria for approval of prior authorization requests for non-sedating antihistamines as of January 1, 2003. These changes are the result of an emergency action taken by the OHCA Board of Directors at their December 12, 2002 meeting. These criteria are subject to change on or before July 1, 2003.

Clients aged 21 and older are required to provide documentation of a 14 day trial of over the counter (OTC) Claritin in addition to a diagnosis which would require administration of a non-sedating antihistamine beyond the 14 day period. Appropriate documentation includes a cash receipt for purchase of the product. OTC Claritin is not a covered benefit for these clients. Clients in this age group with an existing Prior Authorization will be allowed to use all of the approved units before the OTC trial is required. Prior Authorizations for these clients will not be approved for a time period greater than 90 days.

For clients aged 20 and younger, OTC Claritin products, including the 10mg tablets and Reditabs and the 1mg/ml syrup, are covered drugs. If a client aged 20 or younger with a diagnosis which requires continuous administration of a non-sedating antihistamine does not have sufficient symptom control using the OTC Claritin, a prior authorization for one of the other non-sedating antihistamines may be approved.

The combination products which include a non-sedating antihistamine and a decongestant will no longer be covered for adults or children. These products are considered as cough and cold products for which coverage is optional under the federal Medicaid guidelines.

If a trial of OTC Claritin does not provide sufficient symptomatic relief for a client, Zyrtec and Allegra should be tried before Clarinex will be authorized. Because Clarinex is an active metabolite of Claritin, it is unlikely that it will provide significantly better symptom control than OTC Claritin.

Thank you for your continued service to Oklahoma's Medicaid clients.