

**Minutes of the September 21, 2007
Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) Committee Meeting
SD Department of Social Services, Medical Services Division**

Members present

Verdayne Brandenburg, MD; Dana Darger, RPh; William Ladwig, RPh; Dennis Hedge, PharmD; Galen Goeden, RPh; Willis Sutliff, MD; James Engelbrecht, MD.

DSS staff present

Mike Jockheck, RPh; Jill Wellhouse; Larry Iversen.

HID staff present

Christina Faulkner, PharmD.

Administrative Business

The P&T meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 pm. Bill Ladwig, chairman, directed the meeting. The minutes of the March 23, 2007 meeting were presented and Mr. Goeden made a motion to approve as written, with a second by Mr. Darger. The motion was approved unanimously.

DUR Update

Responding to a committee request that the DUR Board review the appropriate utilization of asthma medications, Mr. Jockheck asked for ideas and suggestions from the P&T Committee. Ms. Faulkner showed the committee the DUR letters that would be sent – which are based on the 2007 National Institutes of Health (NIH) guidelines. The committee recommended that the DUR Board might also consider mailing an educational piece to all South Dakota Medicaid providers (including pharmacies and physicians). Mr. Ladwig and Mr. Darger suggested the implementation of an intensive asthma pilot program. This program would initially be limited to providers in a defined area. The selected providers would be visited and educated about the asthma guidelines and be given educational tools to help support their asthma patients. After a period of time, patient compliance and appropriate medication utilization would be analyzed to determine the value of an intense educational intervention. Mr. Jockheck agreed to take the committee's recommendations and present them to the DUR Board.

Prior Authorization Statistics

Ms. Faulkner presented an overview of the prior authorization (PA) activity for May, June, and July 2007.

There were a total of 1,885 PA's processed in the month of May, with 98.89% of those requests responded to in less than 8 hours. There were 1,698 (90%) requests received electronically and 187 (10%) received by fax. Overall, there was a 14% approval rating for the month of May.

In June 2007, there were a total of 1,758 PA requests received, with 98.41% responded to in less than 8 hours. Of those 1,758 requests, there were 1,575 (90%) electronic requests and 183 (10%) faxed requests. The approval rate for June was 14%.

There were 1,552 PA's processed in July. 99.81% of those requests were responded to in less than 8 hours. There were 1,410 (91%) electronic requests and 142 (9%) faxed requests. The overall approval rating for July was 12%.

Ms. Faulkner reminded the committee that effective August 1, 2007, both Ambien CR[®] and Ultram[®] ER required a PA. Both drugs are included in the RxPert system and will process automatically if the patient meets the criteria. From August 1 to August 27, there were 211 requests for Ambien CR[®]. There were 27 approvals and 184 denials which showed an adjusted cost savings of approximately \$16,000. There were 85 requests for Ultram[®] ER. There were 31 approvals and 54 denials, which gave an adjusted cost savings of \$6,445.

Ms. Faulkner reviewed the alert letter that was sent to providers. The letter informed providers that omeprazole would no longer require a prior authorization (PA), and that Ambien CR[®] and Ultram[®] ER would require a PA and what the criteria for coverage was. Ms. Faulkner told the committee that the letter was sent to the top Medicaid pharmacy providers in the state.

Analysis of the Top 25 Drugs/Top 15 Therapeutic Classes

Ms. Faulkner presented an overview of the top 25 drugs by number of claims and by claims cost. The top five drugs based on total number of claims for the 2nd quarter 2007 are as follows: amoxicillin, azithromycin, Singulair[®], hydrocodone/acetaminophen, and Concerta[®].

The top five drugs based on total claims cost are as follows: Concerta[®], Abilify[®], Seroquel[®], Singulair[®], and Adderall XR[®].

Ms. Faulkner briefly reviewed the top 15 therapeutic classes of drugs based on cost for 2nd quarter 2007. The top five classes are as follows: Antipsychotic agents, Anticonvulsants, Anorex/Respir/Cerebral Stimulants, Antidepressants, and Beta-Adrenergic Agonists.

Old Business

In response to a request by the committee at the September meeting, Ms. Faulkner gave an overview of the use of promethazine and ondansetron in pregnancy. She told the committee how many prescriptions were filled for each medication in those patients with

a pregnancy diagnosis, the average number of tablets/suppositories per prescription, and the top prescribers of ondansetron. It was noted that one of the top prescribers of ondansetron was a psychiatrist and the committee discussed the uses of ondansetron in psychiatric patients and tardive dyskinesia. Dr. Sutliff made a motion that HID provide more information about the use of ondansetron in psychiatric patients and present that at the next P&T meeting. He also asked for a report on what other state programs are doing to contain costs of drugs in the antipsychotic class and for a detailed cost breakdown of the antipsychotics used in the state of South Dakota. Mr. Darger seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Utilization of Non-Benzodiazepine Sedative/Hypnotic Agents

Ms. Faulkner reviewed the use of non-benzodiazepine sedative/hypnotic agents by cost and by number of prescriptions dispensed. The committee briefly discussed whether or not prescribers would change to zolpidem when informed that Ambien CR[®] required a prior authorization. Some committee members felt that it was likely that prescribers would switch to other branded sedative/hypnotic agents, while others felt that most providers would be willing to prescribe a trial of zolpidem. The committee asked that Ms. Faulkner look for trends and review the data for the next meeting. The topic was tabled, pending additional information.

Utilization of Benzodiazepines

Ms. Faulkner gave an overview of the number of patients using 2 or more benzodiazepine agents concurrently. There were about 180 to 200 patients per month flagged for therapeutic duplication of these agents. Ms. Faulkner explained that the DUR Board could get a better idea of the utilization of these agents, because they have the opportunity to view a patient profile. She then showed the committee the criteria and the letters that would be sent to physicians. The committee recommended that this topic be referred to the DUR Board.

Bacterial Conjunctivitis

During the June meeting, the P&T Committee requested that HID draft an educational article about bacterial conjunctivitis and the current treatment guidelines. Ms. Faulkner presented the article. The committee approved the content of the article and asked that it be sent to all Medicaid physicians in the state, the state medical journal, and the state pharmacy journal. Ms. Faulkner then reviewed the South Dakota Medicaid utilization of ophthalmic antibiotics, including the fluoroquinolone ophthalmic agents. Dr. Engelbrecht made a motion that HID do additional research and determine the top prescribers of branded antibiotic eye drops and present that information at the next P&T meeting. Mr. Darger seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Weight Loss Medications

Ms. Faulkner briefly reviewed the utilization of weight loss medications in the state of South Dakota. She asked the committee to recommend guidelines for coverage for these medications. Mr. Ladwig asked about current coverage conditions for this class of drugs. Mr. Iversen and Ms. Wellhouse said that these drugs are not covered, except in the instance that a patient is a candidate for gastric bypass surgery and the physician has

requested a trial of a weight loss medication prior to surgery. The committee felt that Ms. Faulkner should continue to evaluate these requests on a case-by-case basis.

A representative of Roche Pharmaceuticals spoke of the importance of treating these patients. He commented that the PA criteria should include those patients with a BMI of 27 or higher and an existing comorbidity or 30 or higher when no comorbidity is present and offered to help in any way needed.

Other Business

Mr. Ladwig spoke to the committee and audience about the loss of Mark Petersen. The committee discussed the idea of establishing a scholarship in Mark Petersen's name at the College of Pharmacy at South Dakota State University. The committee was in full agreement and Ms. Wellhouse agreed to send the details to HID to be distributed to all interested in contributing a memorial.

Russ Sobolta from Sanofi-Aventis spoke briefly about Ambien CR[®]. He reiterated to the committee that Ambien CR[®] was indicated for the treatment of insomnia in patients that have difficulty with sleep maintenance. Mr. Sobolta also discussed his concern that physicians would move from prescribing Ambien CR[®] to other branded sedative/hypnotics rather than using zolpidem. The committee agreed that this was an important concern and Mr. Ladwig indicated that this topic would be reviewed again during the next meeting.

Ms. Faulkner asked the committee for topics for future P&T Committee meetings. It was suggested that the drugs for treatment of osteoporosis, growth hormone and branded asthma products be reviewed in future meetings. The committee also requested that HID review HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor use, review selected new drugs, and that a generic PA form be developed.

The committee briefly discussed the location of the next meeting. It was decided that the meeting would be held at the Ramada. Members of the audience requested that additional microphones be placed in the meeting room.

After deliberation, the next meeting date was set for Friday, December 7, 2007.

There were no further comments or questions and Mr. Darger made a motion to adjourn, with a second by Dr. Sutliff. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Faulkner, PharmD

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