

## Health Update

Prior Authorization (PA) Removal for Medicaid Preferred Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Medications in Pennsylvania  
July 17, 2023

### SUMMARY POINTS

- As of July 10<sup>th</sup>, prior authorizations are no longer required for Pennsylvania Medicaid recipients who receive HCV agents on the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Statewide Preferred Drug List (PDL).
- A hepatitis C agent with a prescribed quantity that exceeds the quantity limit will continue to require a prior authorization.
- Medications **not** on the preferred list of hepatitis C agents will continue to require prior authorizations.
- [A course](#) addressing incorporating HCV services into primary care is being offered by the MidAtlantic AIDS Education and Training Center in September. CME will be offered.

### Introduction

Chronic hepatitis C is the leading cause of liver failure and end-stage liver disease. According to the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), an estimated 2.7 million people in the United States have chronic hepatitis C infection and 15,000 people die annually from hepatitis C-related liver disease, surpassing the death rate for HIV. In 2021, 3.3% of Philadelphia's residents (52,640 people) were estimated to be living with chronic hepatitis C. Disproportionately, 30% of city residents who were newly reported as living with HCV are Black. Hepatitis C disproportionately affects vulnerable communities, such as the substance use community, who already face daunting challenges in accessing and maintaining healthcare.

Providers have reported that when prior authorizations are required for hepatitis C treatment, there is a significant delay between diagnosis and treatment. During that time patients may be lost to care. Requiring PAs also led to significant administrative burdens among clinic staff as they were tasked with ensuring that they had all the appropriate information and paperwork needed for the process. With the removal of prior authorizations for preferred hepatitis C medications, obtaining and providing treatment will be easier and quicker than before. This brings the city and the state one step closer to achieving the national and international elimination goals of reducing morbidity and mortality associated with Hepatitis C by 65% by 2030.

### Clinical Guidelines

New guidelines **remove** prior authorization requirements entirely for preferred hepatitis C agents. Prior authorization requirements remain in place for non-preferred hepatitis C agents and hepatitis C agents with prescribed quantities that exceeds [quantity limits](#). Not all patients will be [eligible for treatment](#) with the treatment agents and durations included in the prior authorization removal. For those patients who are eligible, agents with durations and instructions are as follows:

#### Preferred Hepatitis C Agents

- Mavyret Pellet Pack
  - 8 weeks
  - Dosing is weight based for children 3-12 years old. Refer to package insert.
- Mavyret Tablet
  - 8 weeks total
  - 84 tablets (28 days) with 1 refill
- Sofosbuvir-Velpatasvir Tablet (generic)

- 12 weeks total
- 28 tablets (28 days) with 2 refills
- Ribavirin Capsule
- Ribavirin Tablet

### *Non-Preferred Hepatitis C Agents*

Updated guidelines include changes to the standard clinical criteria for non-preferred products. When determining if a prescription for a non-preferred hepatitis C agent is necessary, reference [Section B. "Review of Documentation for Medical Necessity"](#) and make sure all necessary requirements apply. To see a list of non-preferred agents reference page 28 in the Pennsylvania Department of [Human Services Statewide Preferred Drug List](#).

Both a detectable HCV RNA at baseline and a documented HIV screening (HIV Ag/Ab) were previously required but are now **removed** with the updated guidance and are not necessary when determining medical necessity for a prescription.

### FAQs

- **Who does this change affect?**  
This change only affects persons insured by Medicaid. This change does not apply to persons insured by Medicare or private/commercial plans.
- **Are insurance companies aware of this change?**  
Yes, insurance companies (Medicaid Managed Care Organizations - MCOs) are aware of this change. The MCO plans were notified by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services prior to the update.
- **Who can I call if I have further questions or issues with prior authorization removal?**  
You can call the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' Office of Medical Assistance Program at 1-800-537-8862 or email the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Viral Hepatitis Program at [HEP-DDC@phila.gov](mailto:HEP-DDC@phila.gov).
- **Does a specialty pharmacy need to be used to dispense these medications?**  
There is no change in the dispensing requirements and Managed Care Organizations are allowed to continue to include the HCV agents in their specialty pharmacies. However, providers may petition the individual MCO to dispense through another pharmacy and receive approval. This may avoid delays in start of treatment through preferred mail order pharmacies.

### Resources

- PA Statewide Preferred Drug List 2023: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Pharmacy-Services/Pages/Preferred-Drug-List.aspx>
- PA Fee-for-Service Quantity Limits/Daily Dose Limits: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Pharmacy-Services/Pages/Quantity-Limits-and-Daily-Dose-Limits.aspx>
- Prior Authorization form for Non-Preferred Hepatitis C Agents: [https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/For-Providers/Documents/Pharmacy%20Service%20Fax%20Forms/c\\_092073.pdf](https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/For-Providers/Documents/Pharmacy%20Service%20Fax%20Forms/c_092073.pdf)
- To learn more about hepatitis C: <https://phillyhepatitis.org/hepatitis-c/>
- To find a hepatitis C provider: <https://phillyhepatitis.org/support-care/>
- The Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School (CHLPI) and the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access: <https://stateofhepc.org/>
- AASLD/IDSA Treatment guidelines: <https://www.hcvguidelines.org/>