



MedStar Family Choice

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

For Practitioner

FAQ's about working with the MedStar Family Choice- District of Columbia (MFC-DC) Closed Formulary

How do I get help with a pharmacy problem?

MFC-DC has nurses dedicated to pharmacy services. They can be reached from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday for routine, non-emergency issues. Information may be submitted either by telephone (**855-798-4244**) or by fax (**202-243-6258**). For emergencies after hours call **855-798-4424**, select the Pharmacy option from the menu and follow the instructions to reach the on-call person.

You may submit the information on the Prior Authorization/Non-Formulary Request form. A copy of the form can be found on the website or you may request a paper copy by calling MFC-DC.

Does MFC-DC cover over-the-counter medications?

Yes, there are a variety of commonly used over-the-counter medications on the formulary. They are listed in the formulary document (.pdf) in the section entitled "Over-the-Counter Drug Coverage." A prescription, written or telephoned, is required and refills are permitted. Emergency contraception and condoms do not require a prescription.

What drugs are on Prior Authorization?

A list of all the drugs that require prior authorization is in the front section of the MFC-DC Formulary and in the Prior Authorization Table on this website. Non-formulary medications require Prior Authorization as well.

What do I need to do to obtain an authorization for a medication on Prior Authorization?

The first step should be to review the criteria in the MFC-DC Prior Authorization Table for the medication. The criteria for many of the medications are the FDA indications for the medication as outlined in the current prescribing information (PI), which you will find as a hyperlink in the Table. Some medications have additional criteria or a MFC-DC specific Protocol. All of the Protocols and PIs are available through this website. Paper copies are available upon request. If your patient meets the criteria, submit the information to MFC-DC either by telephone (**855-798-4244**) or by fax (**202-243-6258**). If the criteria are not met, be prepared to support the request with additional information and/or ask to speak to the Medical Director to discuss the issue. For emergencies after hours call **855-798-4244**, select the Pharmacy option from the menu and follow the instructions to reach the on-call person.

What happens if I write a prescription for a non-covered medication?

Most non-formulary medications can be filled one time as an "Emergency Three Day Override" by the pharmacy staff. If you have a patient who needs a non-formulary medication for a chronic condition, you will need to request authorization. To request a non-formulary medicine, you may call (**855-798-4244**) to discuss your patient or fax (**202-243-6258**) the Prior Authorization /Non-Formulary Medication Request form with relevant clinical information. Please offer a medically appropriate reason why a formulary medication cannot be prescribed. For example, the member has tried the formulary medication(s) but developed intolerable side effects.

Are there limits to prescriptions?

In general, the supply of medication that can be dispensed at one time is limited to a one-month supply when filled at a retail pharmacy chain. However, members can fill a 90-day supply of most chronic medications at a retail pharmacy or they may use the Mail Order service through CVS to obtain a 90-day supply. You can call CVS Mail Order pharmacy at **800-966-5772** to start the process of submitting prescriptions for mail order. A list of medications available in 90-day supplies (either by retail or through Mail Order) is available on the MFC-DC website.

Refills can be written for a maximum of twelve months. Some medications have additional restrictions, also called Managed Drug Limitations (MDL). There is a list of the drugs with a MDL in the front section of the formulary along with the limit. To request an override, submit the information to MFC-DC either by telephone (**855-798-4244**) or by fax (**202-243-6258**).

What if I have a patient who needs two prescriptions for the same medication at the same time – one for home and one for school?

The second prescription will automatically be rejected by the pharmacy computer as exceeding a one month's supply. You must contact MFC-DC at **855-798-4244** so that the pharmacy nurse can create a manual override.

What if I have a patient who is planning to go out of town for a prolonged period of time?

The early prescription will automatically be rejected by the pharmacy computer as either an early refill or because it exceeds a one month's supply. You must contact MFC-DC at **855-798-4244** so that the pharmacy nurse can create a manual override. However, please be advised that there will be no early refills for controlled medications. Specifically, MFC-DC will not approve early refills, override Managed Drug Limitations (MDL), replace lost/stolen medications, or provide early refills for travel for controlled medications. Exceptions may be granted if a member is receiving controlled medication(s) for cancer treatment, sickle cell disease, or is in hospice/receiving palliative care.

MFC-DC will only approve future non-controlled medications for members whose enrollment segment shows coverage continuing into that future time span. For example, if it is May and the member is requesting medication while traveling in June, the member must be an active member of MFC-DC in June. If the member's enrollment span ends on May 31, MFC-DC will only approve medication through May 31 and will not approve medication for the month of June.

What if medication is lost or stolen?

If a non-controlled medication is lost or stolen, you will need to re-issue a prescription. The early prescription will automatically be rejected by the pharmacy computer as either an early refill or because it exceeds a one month's supply. You must contact MFC-DC at **855-798-4244** so that the pharmacy nurse can create a manual override. However, please be advised that there will be no early refills for controlled medications. Specifically, MFC-DC will not approve early refills, override Managed Drug Limitations (MDL), replace lost/stolen medications, or provide early refills for travel for controlled medications. Exceptions may be granted if a member is receiving controlled medication(s) for cancer treatment, sickle cell disease, or is in hospice/receiving palliative care.

How can I get a brand name medication dispensed?

Under District of Columbia pharmacy law, the pharmacist is required to dispense the generic version of a medication. A practitioner needs to make a notation on the prescription such as "brand medically necessary" or "no generic substitution" as a message to the pharmacist to dispense the brand name medication.

For MFC-DC to approve the dispensing of a brand name medication when a generic version is available, the practitioner must submit information either by telephone (**855-798-4244**) or by fax (**202-243-6258**) showing that the branded product is medically necessary. MFC-DC will encourage the practitioner to file a FDA Medwatch form.

Can a therapeutic substitution be made by the pharmacist or by MFC-DC?

No, therapeutic substitution is not permitted under District of Columbia pharmacy law.

I just got a call from a pharmacist telling me that they are getting a rejection message for a “Step Therapy.” What does that mean?

The MFC-DC Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee has determined that in some cases prescribing drugs in a particular order is appropriate. The medications on Step Therapy are listed in the front section of the formulary and in the Step Therapy Table on this website. Where the drug is listed within the formulary you will see the notation “ST” next to the drug name and a notation of what drug is recommended first. MFC-DC expects the medications to be prescribed in the order of the step therapy. If following the recommended sequence is not appropriate for the member, submit information either by telephone (**855-798-4244**) or by fax (**202-243-6258**) explaining why.

If the patient filled the first drug using their MFC-DC pharmacy benefit, the computer will automatically process the second drug. If the patient has tried the first line drug in the past but the pharmacist is still getting a rejection message then the computer system does not have the prior prescription. Often that is because the member was your patient, but not yet a member of MFC-DC, or they filled the first prescription under another insurance or paid for it themselves.

How can I get a medication added to the MFC-DC Formulary?

You may request an addition to the MFC-DC formulary by contacting the MFC-DC Medical Director for Pharmacy by telephone (**855-798-4244**) or by fax (**202-243-6258**).

Who decides what medications are on the MFC-DC Formulary?

There is a MFC-DC Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee that includes practitioners and pharmacists. The Committee meets 4-6 times a year. It makes decisions about the medications on the formulary, sets policy, determines the criteria for authorization and other duties. If you would like to learn more about the Committee or join the Committee, please contact the Medical Director for Pharmacy either by telephone (**855-798-4244**) or by fax (**202-243-6258**).