



# Assisting our clients with COVID-19 support

## Frequently Asked Questions



For OptumRx Direct Pharmacy Plans

Updated Mar. 27, 2020

As the business and societal impact of COVID-19 continues to evolve, we want you to know that OptumRx is dedicated to supporting the health and well-being of the clients and members we serve.

Since you and your members have asked many good questions about medication dispensing, supply chains, the administration of clinical programs, and home delivery pharmacy support, we have compiled our most commonly asked questions and answers below.

If you have additional questions, please contact your OptumRx representative.

**Please note:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the primary source for the latest updates on COVID-19. For the most current information, please go to their [site](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Providing medications to your members

#### **Does OptumRx anticipate any type of delays in dispensing prescription medications?**

At this time, OptumRx is not experiencing delays in dispensing prescriptions from Optum-owned pharmacies (Optum Home Delivery, Optum Specialty, Optum Infusion Services, Avella, Genoa, Diplomat) related to COVID-19.

OptumRx is prepared to use anticipatory analysis to determine if, and when, we need to expand operations to include advance dispensing, workforce management, medication access, and more - in ensuring we secure the medications needed for our patients and ability to deliver those medications to members.

#### **How will OptumRx ensure adequate drug supplies and contingency staffing associated with your home delivery and other supply chains?**

We've successfully managed challenging situations in the past including H1N1, Epi Pen shortage, Angiotensin II Receptor blocker drug shortages and numerous natural disasters across the country. We are monitoring the supply chain and actively working to maintain a reliable inventory. We're also evaluating drug supplies going out to our pharmacies and ensuring our best practices and disaster recovery plans are implemented to meet the operational requirements of the organization.

**Will OptumRx take steps to help members and prescribers adjust to supply chain disruption and find therapeutically equivalent medications in case supply challenges do occur?**

Yes, similar to when we have an out-of-stock or recall situation today, we partner with our members and prescribers to identify alternatives and streamline the process to drive a faster turnaround and ensure our members have the therapy they need when they need it.

**How is OptumRx managing the supply of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine at the present time?**

Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine are used to treat a variety of conditions. Hydroxychloroquine is FDA approved for the treatment of systemic lupus erythematosus, malaria, and rheumatoid arthritis. Chloroquine is FDA approved for the treatment and prevention of malaria and extraintestinal amebiasis.

In order to preserve a continued supply of medication for chronic conditions such as systemic lupus and rheumatoid arthritis while ensuring access to acute use for COVID-19, OptumRx will be implementing the following **quantity limits**:

- Hydroxychloroquine will be limited to 30 tablets within a 90-day time period with an automatic bypass (contingent therapy lookback edit) for members who have utilized at least a 60-day supply within the past 120 days.
- Chloroquine will be limited to 30 tablets (or 40 tablets for 250 mg strength) within a 90-day time period.

If members require doses of hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine that exceed the quantity limit, their prescribers may complete a prior authorization following our standard process.

**Is OptumRx proactively waiving any refill-too-soon edits?**

Yes. Our first priority is to ensure our members have access to the diagnostic and treatment care they need, and we are continuing to work with our customers and policymakers on this public health challenge. To ensure we meet the clinical needs of our members and to comply with applicable CDC, Federal, State and Local government requirements, OptumRx Clinical Affairs has implemented an early refill policy for medications. This authorization allows eligible OptumRx members to obtain early refills of their prescription medications if they have refills remaining on file at a participating retail or mail-order pharmacy.

**Will OptumRx extend Prior Authorizations (PAs) for member medications?**

To meet the needs of members and to limit the burden on a stressed provider network amid the COVID-19 outbreak, OptumRx is extending existing PAs that are set to expire on or before May 1, 2020. This policy went into effect **Mar. 19, 2020 at 12:00pm (noon) CST**. For chronic condition medications, OptumRx will extend PAs for an additional 90 days past May 1, 2020. This intervention will ensure convenient access to critical medications is maintained during this period when vulnerable populations are being directed to take precautionary measures. OptumRx will continue to re-evaluate the need for further extensions.

Drugs with significant abuse potential (i.e., opioids) or those that are generally dosed for finite durations or intermittently (i.e., hepatitis agents, fertility agents) as identified by OptumRx will follow the normal process for renewals. Prior authorization requirements for medications that are newly prescribed will also remain in place.

**If lab test confirmation is required as part of utilization management criteria of a specialty drug, how will OptumRx ensure access to the specialty drug in the case of a quarantine?**

OptumRx will evaluate the need to relax required utilization management criteria including any required lab tests for those members impacted by a quarantine.

**Will OptumRx specialty medications be available to members for more than a 30-day supply?**

During the COVID-19 outbreak, when an existing patient calls to refill their specialty medication, Optum Specialty Pharmacy will offer patients a one-time, 90-day supply of key specialty medications instead of the traditional 30-day supply. This policy will be implemented by mid-April.

This policy will not apply to patients newly initiating specialty therapy, or drugs within the following categories – which will remain limited to 30-day supply only:

- Acute medications
- Controlled substances
- Drugs subject to REMS programming requiring 30 day dispensing and monitoring

- Drugs with limited expiration dating
- Drugs where storage/handling issues would increase risk of waste
- Office-administered injectable/infusible therapies
- Drugs experiencing supply shortages
- Drugs dosed less frequently than once monthly
- Drugs whose monthly ingredient cost exceeds \$10,000

### **Will medications used to treat COVID-19 be covered in my plan?**

Medications used in supportive care for the treatment of COVID-19 will be covered per the member's current health plan benefit design. While there is no current treatment other than supportive care, OptumRx is monitoring the use of anti-viral products and production of a vaccine, and will continue to aggressively monitor CDC recommendations and outcomes of clinical studies.

### **What if a member is willing to pay out-of-pocket to stockpile medications?**

Consistent with AMCP and other published policy, stockpiling is not encouraged because shortages are likely to increase when stockpiling occurs. We continue to assess if policy should change as CDC guidance evolves.

## **Retail pharmacy support**

### **Is OptumRx making any changes to its retail network policies regarding mailing and signature requirements due to COVID-19?**

OptumRx communicates frequently with our retail pharmacy partners to ensure awareness and alignment on actions being taken due to the COVID-19 situation. We have removed certain restrictions at the present time.

- OptumRx will not subject retail pharmacies to mailing restrictions in accordance with CMS guidance.
- OptumRx has temporarily waived the signature requirement of mailed medications until a date to be determined.
  - The delivery logs of impacted claims are to be documented with the verbiage "**Impacted by COVID-19,**" still allowing the signature log to be tied to the specific prescription (e.g., Rx# and fill date).
  - Signature requirements for medications that are picked up at the pharmacy will also be waived, and signature logs of impacted claims are to be documented with the verbiage "Impacted by COVID-19" and initialed by the pharmacy staff.

OptumRx is working alongside other PBMs with the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy and state Boards of Pharmacy to find the best ways to navigate the current regulatory landscape and take appropriate measures to allow us to operate effectively for patient care.

### **Can the OptumRx customer service or website help identify local pharmacies in a member's geography which offer delivery service?**

We recommend members contact their local pharmacy directly to check if they offer delivery service or determine if their prescription can be filled by OptumRx's home delivery service.

### **How can a member find out if their local pharmacy is open to pick up a prescription?**

We recommend members contact your local pharmacy directly to determine if they are open and filling prescriptions.

## **Optum Home Delivery Pharmacy support**

### **What role will OptumRx Home Delivery play in the distribution of acute prescriptions in the case of quarantine?**

OptumRx Home Delivery will continue to play its primary role in the supply of chronic maintenance medications and a limited number of acute medications. OptumRx will continue to work collaboratively with our network of 68,000 pharmacies which are best situated to dispense acute medications.

### **Will OptumRx allow members to change their retail prescriptions to Home Delivery?**

If a member is interested in switching a prescription to Home Delivery, they can check through the OptumRx.com website to see if it is available. If a consumer is already on the phone, we will work with them through our normal onboarding process for new Home Delivery customers.

### **Has OptumRx considered waiving shipping fees for medications?**

OptumRx Home Delivery **does not charge members shipping fees**. We already cover shipping costs for our members, with the exception of member-requested expedited shipping costs.

## **Call center support**

### **Is OptumRx experiencing higher than normal call center activity?**

Our first priority is to ensure members have access to the medications they need. At this time, OptumRx is experiencing high call volumes and longer than usual wait times. We are encouraging members to leverage our automated voice system or visit [OptumRx.com](https://www.optumrx.com) to immediately fill their prescriptions or check on order status. We are not experiencing any delays in shipments at this time.

## **Medication safety**

### **Are your medications safe, or could they be carrying COVID-19?**

At this time, OptumRx has no reason to suspect any concerns with medications being used in our pharmacies and is continuing to monitor the drug supply chain. OptumRx is firmly committed to the highest standards in selecting the vendors from which we source medications. Our prescription medications are purchased from approved sources that have implemented protections that comply with all FDA regulations as well as national standards of the Verified Accredited Wholesaler Drug program (VAWD).

## **If there is a COVID-19 vaccine**

### **How will OptumRx support access to a COVID-19 vaccine?**

There is currently no approved vaccine for this virus. As soon as one is available, we will work to ensure access for our customers. We have a network of 68,000 pharmacies that can dispense vaccines and we will actively work with our pharmacies to administer any vaccines based on CDC recommendations and national availability.

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**If you would like additional information, please contact your OptumRx representative.**

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2300 Main Street, Irvine, CA 92614

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