

## **Prior Authorization (PA), & Precert Info**

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### Prior Authorization (PA), Precertification, & Step Therapy Procedures

It is with sincere regret that I need to give you this information. Alabama Public Education's Employees' Insurance Plan (PEEHIP) has implemented significant restrictions on my ability to prescribe you what I believe to be the best medications to treat you, or your child's, condition. I assume that other insurers will soon also implement these restrictions, as they have in other parts of the United States. The thought behind step therapy is that many patients can be treated with less expensive generic drugs, compared to more expensive branded drugs, and this is certainly the case with many classes of medications.

Unfortunately with two classes of medicines we commonly prescribe, nose sprays and acid blockers, the currently allowed acid-blocking medications as beginning therapy are clearly inferior, but may be effective for patients especially with mild gastroesophageal reflux. Unfortunately, when gastroesophageal reflux is severe enough to worsen asthma, or cause a chronic cough and throat clearing, many of our patients need the most effective therapies.

However, most concerning of the policies implemented on October 1, 2008 are regarding nasal steroid sprays. The biggest difference among the various brands of nose spray is the way they feel going into your nose; all of them, except Rhinocort Aqua, essentially have an equal affect. While it is true that the generic nasal steroid sprays, if used regularly, are as effective as the branded nasal steroid sprays, unfortunately an increasing number of the generics on the market feel like hot pepper sauce when instilled in the nose. Let me explain why: the medications in nose sprays are not water soluble and must be placed in an alcohol type liquid so that they can be sprayed into the nose. Major pharmaceutical companies do special things to "glorify" these alcohol vehicles to make them feel better when sprayed into the nose. Generic manufacturers do no such favors for us. It is especially concerning that this policy was implemented when the generic nose sprays are not even 20 percent less expensive than branded nose sprays.

We have previously refused to attempt to precertify for two reasons; first, the process is arduous and very time-consuming for my staff, and second it is almost universally unsuccessful. However, since many of the generic nose sprays are so hideous, we have decided to change our policy. We have decided to charge a \$30 fee to any patient who desires precertification of the drug. We offer no guarantee of success and expect, in fact, a high probability of failure. However, to have any chance of success, you must first have filled at least one prescription for the generic in question at least 30 days prior to the application being made. In many cases, we will also give you samples with coupons for a non-preferred brand. If, after 30 days has passed since you filled your prescription and you desire us to attempt to precertify a branded nose spray, contact our office online at [www.eallergy.yourmd.com](http://www.eallergy.yourmd.com) and register. Once your registration has been approved, you may request an online consultation and state that you desire that we attempt to precertify an alternative nose spray. Any specific comments about why you do not like the non-

preferred alternative will be helpful. Your credit card will be charged \$30, and we will notify you by email when we receive results.