



Drug Utilization Management and Quality Assurance

A major goal as a Medicare Part D contractor is to ensure that our beneficiaries receive safe, high-quality, cost-effective medication therapy. To achieve this goal America's 1st Choice Health Plans has entered into a contracted agreement with a claims processor to put certain edits in place to promote appropriate medication therapy. These edits help prevent patients from taking drugs that may have harmful interactions, prevent patients from receiving higher than recommended doses of a medication, notify patients of lower cost alternative medications, and provide other safety and efficacy safeguards.

America's 1st Choice Health Plans uses a Pharmacy and Therapeutics committee which is responsible for the establishment and implementation of medical standards and criteria for the concurrent and retrospective DUR (Drug Utilization Review) programs. It is the goal of the Pharmacy and Therapeutics committee to improve the quality of care for America's 1st Choice Health Plans members through the use of drugs, assuring that the drugs are appropriate, medically necessary, and not likely to result in adverse medical effects. The Pharmacy and Therapeutics committee is charged with making recommendations for educational interventions to prescribers and pharmacists to identify and reduce the frequency of patterns of fraud, abuse, gross overuse and inappropriate or medically unnecessary care.

Drug Utilization Management

America's 1st Choice Health Plans requires participating pharmacies to perform a Drug Utilization Review (DUR) before a member receives their prescription. This is designed to analyze drug safety and usage for members based on their total medication profile. The DUR is an important tool that screens online, as the prescription is being filled, for the following potential problems.

- Drug-Drug Interactions
- Drug-Disease Problems
- Drug-Age Precautions
- Drug-Gender Precautions
- Drug-Pregnancy Precautions
- Drug-Allergy Precautions
- Incorrect Dosage Precautions
- Incorrect Duration of Drug Therapy
- Therapeutic Duplication
- Excessive Use Precautions
- Prescription Limitations
- Compliance Monitoring

The drug utilization review serves as a measure to ensure that drug usage criteria are met and satisfy FDA guidelines, and clinical protocols as adopted by our plan's Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committee, and Medispan's Criteria. Based on this review, the attending pharmacist and/or physician can make the most beneficial decision to the patient involving their pharmaceutical care.

Quality Assurance

America's 1st Choice Health Plans ensures the safety and health of its members through the establishment of effective Quality Assurance measures and systems. We do this to reduce medication errors and adverse drug reactions, and improve medication utilization. These measures include making sure that providers comply with pharmacy practice standards, drug utilization review, internal medication error identification systems, medical therapy management programs, and pharmacy and therapeutics committees. America's 1st Choice Health Plans also partners with state Quality Improvement Organizations (QIO) that are contracted with Medicare to collect, analyze, and report data based on medication therapy practices.