

Member Matters



Volume 4, Issue 3

Take control of your diabetes

ODS Health Plans is offering our diabetic patients an important program called the Diabetes Control Network™ (DCN). The DCN program is a cooperative educational effort with Pfizer Inc., a respected name in diabetic products and disease management.

The information provided by the DCN program is believed to help lower your risk of diabetic complications, allowing you to live a longer, healthier and happier life.

By participating in DCN, you will receive free information about how diabetes affects you, lifestyle considerations and motivational tips on how to adhere to your doctor's diabetes treatment plan.

Invitations went out in June to our ODS Health Plans' physicians who treat diabetes. They received clinical information with the latest medical guidelines written by national diabetes experts.

If you are a diabetic, look for your invitation to the DCN program soon.

If you have questions regarding our participation in the DCN program, please call the Customer Service phone number on your ODS Health Plans' identification card.

**ODS Health Plans will
be closed on:
Labor Day, September 3**

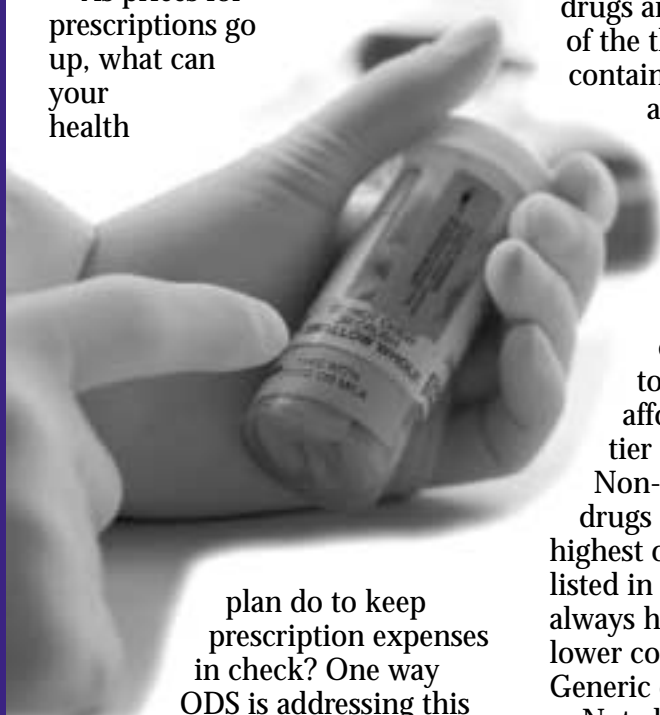


Keeping expenses in check: the ODS Preferred Drug program

Part III

In our last two issues of Member Matters, we have looked more closely at the use of prescription drugs to find the source of increasing costs. We have found that direct-to-consumer advertising of brand name drugs, more new and expensive drugs and the aging population all contribute to a rise in demand and cost of many prescriptions.

As prices for prescriptions go up, what can your health



plan do to keep prescription expenses in check? One way ODS is addressing this trend of rising prices is with the three-tier Preferred Drug Program.

"The three-tier system has major implications for cost containment," says Robin Richardson, director of Pharmaceutical Programs at ODS Health Plans. "It creates an incentive to use clinically effective less expensive drugs, while continuing to give members choices."

The ODS Preferred Quick Reference Drug Chart lists the

three tiers: Generic, Preferred Brand and Non-Preferred Brand. You can find the chart on the ODS website:

www.odshealthplans.com or can request a copy by calling ODS Customer Service at 1-800-852-5195.

The three-tier Preferred Drug Program groups medications in three different lists called "tiers." Each one of the tiers has a different copay the member must pay. Tier one lists only generic drugs and usually has the lowest of the three copays. Tier two contains brand name drugs that are considered Preferred

Drugs and has a slightly higher copay than the generic list. This Preferred Drug tier lists medications that are considered safe and effective and are available to members at the most affordable price. The third tier lists the more expensive, Non-Preferred brand name drugs and the copay is the highest of the three tiers. Drugs listed in the Non-Preferred tier always have clinically effective, lower cost alternatives listed as Generic or Preferred.

Not all drugs are currently available on the Preferred Quick Reference Drug Chart. While drugs used to treat allergies and high blood pressure are included on the list, drugs used to treat less common diseases like multiple sclerosis or cancer, are not on the list. This is because there are many medication choices that have been proven equally safe and effective for

See **Pharmacy**, back

Understanding emergency benefits while traveling this summer

Traveling is a summertime tradition. Making sure you understand your ODS benefits regarding emergency care is extremely important.

You and your insured dependents are covered for treatment of medical emergencies worldwide. ODS covers emergency care at the in-network level under managed care plans with benefits payable at the contracted rates we would pay participating physicians and providers. Services under other than managed care plans will be subject to usual and customary

rates when determining benefits for non-participating physician and providers.

Check your benefit member handbook for specific benefits that may apply to you. If you have specific medical benefits questions, call ODS Customer Service at 1-800-852-5195.



Many families will hit the road this summer for vacation. Knowing your individual benefits in case of an emergency should be part of your getaway preparations.

Pharmacy: understanding costs, alternatives is key

Continued from Page 1

treatment of allergies and high blood pressure. However, drug treatment choices for less common diseases are more limited. For this reason, drugs not found on the list are generally considered Preferred Drugs.

Systems like the ODS Preferred Drug Program helps members understand the correlation between drug costs and copays.

“We’ve had a good response to this system,” says

Richardson.

“It has been a particularly effective way to encourage patients and physicians to sit down and talk about prescriptions, and this helps

ensure that the medications prescribed are medically necessary. It also doesn’t penalize people with chronic health conditions who require long-term management with medication.”



Next issue: Part IV of our four-part series. We will discuss prior authorizations, health education programs and mail-order pharmacy benefits as additional tools to manage prescription drug costs.