

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan Automated Prerequisite Step Therapy Policies

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan applies Automated Prerequisite Step Therapy criteria to certain medications that have clinically appropriate and cost-effective alternatives that can be used as initial therapy for the condition in question. This procedure helps to monitor utilization, enhance Preferred Drug List (PDL) compliance, and promote appropriate prescribing and delivery of high quality cost-effective care. The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee established the Automated Prerequisite Step Therapy Criteria for these services.

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan Automated Prerequisite Step Therapy criteria are based on solid evidence-based review principles. These principles include current literature reviews, consultation with practicing physicians and pharmacists who serve in the Plan's service area and who possess a wide range of specialized medical expertise, governmental agency policies (i.e. U.S. Food and Drug Administration [FDA]), as well as national accreditation organization standards. Prior authorization criteria are revised and updated annually and more frequently as new evidence becomes available that prompts needed revisions.

The automated portion of this policy will occur as follows. When the prescription, for a drug that is part of the step-therapy protocol, is presented at the pharmacy and processed:

1. The claims processing system will look at the patient's drug history.
2. If the prerequisite step-therapy protocol criteria are met, based on the patient's profile or demographic information, as defined in the applicable step therapy criteria for the drug in question, the claim will process.
3. If these criteria are not met, the claim will reject at the point-of-service with a customized message specific to the requested agent identifying this as a step therapy and indicating the prerequisite alternatives.
4. When the claim rejects, due to this edit at the point-of-service, the pharmacist will need to contact the prescriber to request an alternate therapy or to initiate the prior authorization request process.

Physicians who intend to prescribe drugs for which step therapy is required, for patients that do not satisfy the step therapy protocol criteria, should request prior authorization from using the appropriate prior authorization request form.

For a complete list of medications requiring step therapy please refer to the UnitedHealthcare Community Plan PDL.