

North Carolina State Health Plan Allergy Treatment Prior Authorization Program

Beginning April 1, 2008, all members, 6 years old and up, with a prescription for non-sedating antihistamines (NSA) - Xyzal[®], Clarinex[®], Clarinex D[®], Allegra[®] (fexofenadine), Allegra D[®], or cetirizine, as well as prescriptions for Singulair[®] for allergies, will be required to use an over-the-counter (OTC) non-sedating antihistamine [Claritin[®] or Alavert[®] (loratadine) or Zyrtec[®] (cetirizine)] prior to approval of the prescription product. Singulair use for asthma (presence of asthma medication must be in the member's pharmacy claims history in the past 12 months) is not subject to the prior authorization requirement.

Exceptions, which must be documented by the provider, are:

- Intolerance (sensitivity, drug allergy or adverse effect) to treatment with an OTC NSA, OR
- Verification that the OTC NSA has been ineffective after a 30-day trial

Members taking a prescription allergy medication who have already tried the OTC alternatives will need to have their provider complete a coverage review with Medco. Providers may call Medco toll-free at 1-800-417-1764, from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm eastern time, Monday through Friday, starting now to request a review. **Unless the doctor obtains approval during a review, members will be responsible for the full cost of the medication.**

For additional information please visit the State Health Plan website www.shpnc.org. Members may contact Medco customer service at 1-800-336-5933.