

Prior Authorization

Prior Authorization

What is a Prior Authorization?

Prior Authorization (PA) means you must obtain approval for certain medications to be covered by your plan. There are different types of PA reviews. See step therapy and quantity limits on next page.

Why do some medications require PA?

PA is used to make sure the medication you are taking is appropriate and effective for your condition.

How does PA work?

We work with your doctor to ensure safe and effective use of select prescription medications. Before your copay can be applied at the pharmacy, the medication must be approved by OptumRx, along with your doctor.

How do I know if I take a medication that requires PA?

Check your formulary. If you see "PA" next to your medication, you need a Prior Authorization. You can also talk to your doctor about whether another option could work for you.

How do I request a PA?

There are two ways to request a PA. On or after your plan's start date.

1. Call OptumRx to request a PA. With your permission, we will contact your doctor.
2. Ask your doctor to contact OptumRx directly.

How long does it take for a PA to be approved or denied?

Once your PA has been submitted and received, it usually takes up to 72 hours to process. If your PA request needs additional review, it may take longer. If your doctor submits a PA request electronically, they may receive approval within minutes of submitting the request.

How do I know if my medication has been approved for coverage?

Once we review the information from your doctor, we will send a letter to you and your doctor letting you know if your medication coverage is approved or denied.

- Check the status of your PA by signing into your online account at optumrx.com/calpers.
- If your medication is approved, coverage will be provided under your benefit. You can continue to fill your prescription at the pharmacy as usual during the approved PA period. Depending on your benefit plan and medication, you may be able to save money by using home delivery from OptumRx.

What happens when a PA request is denied?

If your medication is denied, we'll send a letter telling you why and provide information about the appeal process.

Why is OptumRx questioning my doctor's choice of medication for me?

We want to make sure that coverage and costs align with the effectiveness of the medication you have been prescribed. If your medication needs a PA, that means we need more information from your doctor before deciding if your plan should cover the medication. If we don't get this information from your doctor or your PA is not approved, we may not cover the medication.

What is a PA for step therapy?

Some medications have lower-cost equivalents available. Step Therapy requires that you first try a more cost-effective medication before your plan will cover a more expensive option. Usually Step 1 medications are generic medications that have proven effective for people with your condition.

How do I know if my medication requires step therapy?

Check your formulary. If you see "ST" next to your medication, you will need to try a lower-cost option before the higher-cost medication will be covered. Talk to your doctor about what options could work for you.

What is a PA for quantity limit?

A quantity limit is a restriction placed on the amount of medication covered over a period of time. You will only be able to get a certain amount of medication each time you fill.

Why are there quantity limits?

Some medications have quantity limits for quality and safety reasons.

How are quantity limits determined?

Our review committee of independent doctors and pharmacists meets regularly to review medications and consider how they should be covered by pharmacy benefit plans. Often quantity limits are based on:

- FDA approved indications
- Manufacturer's package labeling instructions
- Well-accepted or published clinical recommendations.

More information



Online:
optumrx.com/calpers



Mobile app for Basic members:
OptumRx



Basic Member Phone:
1-855-505-8110



Medicare/Part D Member Phone:
1-855-505-8106



OptumRx specializes in the delivery, clinical management and affordability of prescription medications and consumer health products. We are an Optum® company — a leading provider of integrated health services. Learn more at [optum.com](https://www.optum.com).

All Optum trademarks and logos are owned by Optum, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

© 2019 Optum, Inc. All rights reserved. WF1036232_ORX_CalPERS_PA GME_02042019