



## Prior Authorization



### WHAT IS PRIOR AUTHORIZATION (PA)?

The Prior Authorization program is a process whereby specific drugs are clinically reviewed prior to allowing their coverage. Many new drugs are very expensive or they have a high potential for inappropriate use. Your plan may require Prior Authorization for some of these drugs. This helps to ensure that they are used appropriately so they will be available to those who need them.

*Optimizing the Value of the Drug Benefit*

New drugs are reviewed by ESI Canada to determine if they are candidates for PA. Drug specific forms and Clinical criteria are developed for drugs deemed to be suitable. Using a combination of online messages, physician contacts, and clinical evaluations, the Prior Authorization process helps you receive approval for reimbursement under your plan for these drugs in a timely fashion.

### HOW DOES PA WORK?

If you have been prescribed a drug requiring a prior authorization, you have 2 options: (a) you may want to get approval for coverage before filling your prescription; or (b) you can fill your prescription first, pay for it and go through the PA process after.

- a) You may want to wait until you have received approval for the prior authorized drug to get your prescription filled.
  1. The first step is to get the PA Request Forms;
    - They are available on ESI Canada's website, at [www.esi-canada.com](http://www.esi-canada.com) and can be accessed and printed from there by anyone (e.g. patient, pharmacist, physician or plan sponsor).
    - Another way to access these drug forms is through your pharmacy. When the pharmacy submits your prescription to ESI Canada for a drug requiring Prior Authorization, it receives an online message indicating that payment for the drug is conditional upon approval under PA and to call ESI Canada. The pharmacy contacts ESI Canada's Call Centre by telephone and the Call Centre Representative can direct the pharmacist to the website or fax a PA Request form to the pharmacy.
  2. Please fill out any required sections on the form, including your authorization to disclose health information. You must take the form to your physician to complete. If your physician charges a fee to complete the form, you are responsible for paying the fee.
  3. The completed PA form has to be returned by fax (905.712.6329) or mail to ESI Canada.
  4. A clinical pharmacist at ESI Canada evaluates the completed PA form to ensure that you meet the established criteria. Upon receipt of a form containing all required information, it will take two to five business days to evaluate and update your profile.



**ESI CANADA**®



## Prior Authorization

Page 2



### *Optimizing the Value of the Drug Benefit*

5. If the PA is approved:
  - The carrier or ESI Canada updates your profile to allow for payment of the drug.
  - The carrier or ESI Canada sends you a letter indicating that the PA has been approved.
  - You must contact your pharmacy to pick up your prescription or arrange for delivery.
6. If the PA is denied:
  - The carrier or ESI Canada updates your profile to deny payment of the drug.
  - The carrier or ESI Canada sends you a letter indicating that payment for the drug has not been allowed.

- b) Otherwise, you may pay for your prescription immediately and mail a paper claim to your insurance carrier for processing. However, the PA request must still be done and you will not be reimbursed until you receive PA approval. If, after the PA process [step (a) above] is completed, the drug is not eligible under your group plan, you will not be reimbursed for the cost of the prescription.

Since there is an additional step before you can fill a prescription, it may take a little longer to get your medication. If your physician is not available to complete the PA form, it could take additional time before you can receive prior authorization for the PA drug.

The PA process ensures that you receive necessary health benefits without compromising quality of care. Only medically approved treatments are paid for, based on a review of the clinical literature. This PA process distances your insurance provider and plan sponsor from making decisions about coverage for new prescription drugs while maintaining your confidentiality. As well, you do not have to submit manual claim forms using this process.

If you have any questions about the PA process, please contact your plan administrator.

Note: ESI Canada offers its customers different products. It is our customers who decide which of these products will be offered through their own programs. Some products may not be available in all provinces/territories.



**ESI CANADA**

[www.esi-canada.com](http://www.esi-canada.com)