

## Summer 2007

### **NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS AND DRUG PLANS**

The regulation of natural health products (complementary medicines, or traditional remedies) came under scrutiny by Health Canada in May 1997. After a long review process the [Natural Health Products Regulations](#) came into effect on January 1, 2004. Through the regulations Natural Health Products (NHPs) are now defined as:

- Vitamins and minerals
- Herbal remedies
- Homeopathic medicines
- Traditional medicines such as traditional Chinese medicines
- Probiotics, and
- Other products like amino acids and essential fatty acids

Products which previously had DINs will be assigned NPNs.

**Effective October 1, 2007** products which currently have been assigned NPNs ( for example many brands of calcium and Vitamin D) will no longer be eligible on drug plans. NPNs will not be recognized by the Green Shield Canada Advantage<sup>®</sup> system.

**Please note**, the expired DINs previously assigned to these particular products will not be recognized by our system.

Eligibility status will be sent to you when billing for claims for these products. For ineligible products you will receive the message “invalid DIN/PIN” at the pharmacy level.

The re-assignment of DINs to NPNs is expected to be an on-going process. As products receive an NPN (for example calcium and vitamin D) and DINs expired the particular product will lose it's eligibility status on drug plans.

Green Shield Canada is working closely with the Natural Health Products Directorate to ensure that all other products which fall under the Natural Health Products designation will be removed in a timely manner without causing any inconvenience to plan members.

### **CLAIMS DENIED?**

Pharmacies will now only be able to submit up to three denied claims for any one claim. Claims are often denied as the system is looking for further intervention codes or coordination of benefit(s). Sending numerous claims with denials is cumbersome to the network. Upon a third denied claim you will receive a message “call adjudicator”.

## **A GREEN SHIELD CANADA FIRST - SMOKING CESSATION AND PHARMACISTS' SERVICES**

In the fall of 2006, one of Green Shield Canada's major clients opted to offer their employees the opportunity to become healthier by quitting smoking with the aid of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). NRT products are usually not a benefit of drug plans due to being unscheduled; therefore the client may direct Green Shield Canada to provide the benefit over a defined period of time. In this case the client opted to tie the eligibility of the NRT products to pharmacist cognitive services for which the pharmacist was paid. Green Shield Canada recruited pharmacies that had pharmacist(s) with training in smoking cessation that follow the stages of change model. Pharmacists were paid for their direct patient contact (7 points of contact).

Overall the program did not attract a large number of participants (less than 100) but the success rate was higher than expected. Currently Green Shield Canada has one client with employees in the program and one program has ended. Other Green Shield Canada clients have expressed interest.

Pharmacist and plan member responses have been very positive. Plan members felt that they were successful in their attempts in quitting due to the pharmacist's support. Pharmacists reported how much they enjoyed the program.

Green Shield Canada hopes to release additional results in the coming months.

## **REMINDER TO ONTARIO PHARMACISTS**

When coordinating drug claims between Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) and Green Shield Canada you should only be billing the ODB dispensing fee of \$7.00. By "balance billing" for drug cost or fee differences to your patient's Green Shield plan you are contravening the Ontario Drug Benefit Act. These claims should not exceed ODB's adjudicated copay or deductible amount. In addition when claims are accumulating towards the \$100 deductible, Green Shield Canada is also counting the dollars and any amount passed on to the private plan will artificially reach the \$100 and stop paying except for the \$6.11.

## **WHAT'S NEW WITH THE COMPOUND POLICY?**

Did you know that Green Shield Canada has a defined Compound Policy? Do you know what the eligible ingredients and eligible bases are?

Check out the Compound Policy in the Claims Manual on Green Shield Canada's website:

[www.greenshield.ca/English/HealthServiceProviders/](http://www.greenshield.ca/English/HealthServiceProviders/)