

Natural Health Products (NHPs)

Legislation passed in 2004 to regulate natural health products (NHPs) and from this legislation, the *Natural Health Product Directorate* was formed. Since that time, the Directorate has recognized a comprehensive list of products that are now deemed NHPs. The manufacturers of these products have until the end of 2009 to comply with the registration of their products.

Green Shield Canada has decided to proactively address this matter and remove all NHPs from all benefit plans unless it is specifically requested by the plan sponsor to continue to include them as eligible benefits. In some cases, collective bargaining agreements necessitate keeping some of these natural health products as eligible benefits at this time.

Removal of all affected products will be effective April 1, 2008. It is anticipated that regular maintenance of these products will continue for some time after April 1, 2008. Commonly claimed NHPs that will no longer be eligible under most Green Shield Canada plans include: calcium supplements, iron supplements, potassium supplements and natural laxatives (e.g. psyllium and senna compounds).

Compound Policy

As a reminder, Green Shield Canada's unique compound policy can be found in the Claims Manual available @ greenshield.ca/English/HealthServiceProviders/Pharmacy/. Only a single DIN/PIN can be transmitted in a compound claim and not the entire ingredient list. Random auditing of claims is therefore necessary to determine eligibility of each ingredient. Compounds should be submitted using the DIN/PIN of the vehicle (base).

Ranitidine Scheduling

Within the past year, NAPRA (National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities) has reviewed the Ranitidine molecule twice. Ranitidine 150 mg can now clearly be purchased without a prescription OR consultation with a pharmacist. With this recent definitive re-scheduling, all ranitidine 150 mg products will be ineligible on many Green Shield Canada plans (e.g. plans that require "*prescription only*" products) **effective April 1, 2008**. As is customary, Green Shield Canada will consider the most restrictive scheduling and as such, plans that include some OTC products may continue to have ranitidine 150 mg products as eligible benefits.

Smoking Cessation Program

Green Shield Canada is pleased to announce that the Smoking Cessation Program has grown! The program provides plan members and beneficiaries of participating plan sponsors (employers) with Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and cognitive services (supportive counseling) provided by a pharmacist. Since NRTs are now considered natural health products (NHPs), eligibility is based on assessment and follow-up by a pharmacist.

It is imperative that pharmacists document and submit their follow-ups to ensure payment of cognitive services and provide key data to Green Shield Canada for statistical purposes.

Current Employers Providing This Benefit

- ***Green Shield Canada*** Employees of Green Shield Canada wishing to quit smoking may initiate their quit attempt at any time.

- ***Chrysler Canada Inc.*** Employees of Chrysler Canada Inc. have been able to access this benefit starting January 1, 2008. The program is ongoing. One treatment per year per plan member will be allowed. Restrictions have been placed on the Oral Smoking Cessation products (e.g. Zyban® and Champix®) similar to restrictions placed on the patches, gum and inhaler (e.g. plan members can only qualify for the oral products if they are assessed by a pharmacist and go through the program).