

Essential Drug List

Control plan costs and preserve member choice



You're working hard to balance the health needs of your employees with the practical needs of your business — and we're here to help. Our Essential Drug List covers high-quality, affordable drugs that are essential to members' health so you don't have to compromise on either end.

Why the Essential Drug List may be right for your company

Your pharmacy plan may have an open, broad formulary, such as our National Drug List, which includes almost all medications. Our Essential Drug List includes the essentials, but is a more focused list that offers pharmacy cost savings while ensuring there are no gaps in care for your employees.

How it works

The Essential Drug List excludes medications that cost more, so it's easier to find the most cost-effective choices instead — those lower-cost formulary alternatives or over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. Formulary drugs are on different tiers depending on the member cost-share.

Why the Essential Drug List?

- Offers a variety of brand and generic medication choices
- Provides savings by excluding drugs that have lower-cost formulary alternatives, or over-the-counter (OTC) alternatives (such as nasal steroids, PPIs)
- Includes drugs that don't have OTC or lower-cost formulary alternatives
- Multi-source brands (brands with a generic equivalent) are not covered
- Offers limited specialty drug coverage (there are some non-covered specialty medications)
- Maintains clinical integrity without compromising quality and safety
- Was developed and is reviewed regularly through the Pharmacy and Therapeutic (P&T) process²

Savings you can count on

No fuss. Just the essentials. To find out how you can switch to the Essential Drug List, contact your Anthem representative.

Are all medications on the Essential Drug List?

The Essential Drug List is a closed formulary/drug list. That means, sometimes, drugs employees take won't be covered. But on average, groups that move from the National Drug List to the Essential Drug List can expect only about 9% employee disruption where drugs are no longer covered. Only 15 drugs make up approximately 60% of the potential disruption and all of these have a formulary or OTC alternative:¹

Drug class	Non-formulary drugs	Alternative(s)
ADHD/Stimulant	Adderall XR	amphetamine combo ER
Allergy/Nasal Steroid	budesonide & flunisolide nasal spray	Flonase Allergy*, Nasacort Allergy*
GLP1 (Diabetes)	Victoza	Bydureon & Byetta
Insulin (Diabetes)	Novolog	Humalog
Estrogen Hormone	Minivelle	estradiol patch
PPI (Gastrointestinal)	omeprazole, lansoprazole, pantoprazole, Nexium	omeprazole*, lansoprazole*, Nexium*
High Cholesterol	Crestor	atorvastatin (Lipitor)
Oral contraceptive	Minastrin FE & Lo Estrin FE	Multiple generic contraceptives
LABA combos (Respiratory)	Symbicort	Advair/HFA, Anoro Ellipta, Breo Ellipta & Dulera
Thyroid Hormone	Synthroid	levothyroxine

*OTC — Available over the counter without a prescription required

What to do if a medication is not on the Essential Drug List

There may be times when a medication isn't on the Essential Drug List and the member's doctor thinks that another option is not right. The prescriber can request an exception review, which usually requires trying two formulary drugs before coverage is allowed. Specialty drugs will be subject to a trial of the preferred drug on our list, if available, and subject to prior authorization. Prior authorization is when the plan reviews a drug first before it's covered.

We're here to help you understand your plan and the Essential Drug List.

Let us help guide you and your company's needs.

¹ Anthem Enterprise large group fully insured book-of-business. (January 2014 to December 2014)

² Anthem's P&T team is made up of physicians and pharmacists that quarterly make sure every drug maintains a high level of quality.

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