

Security Health Plan to initiate step therapy with new starts for certain Part B drugs

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The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently issued guidance that provides Medicare Advantage plans the option of applying step therapy for physician-administered Part B drugs in a way that lowers costs and improves the quality of care for Medicare beneficiaries.

Step therapy is a type of prior authorization for a medical condition that begins with the most preferred drug therapy and progresses to other therapies only if necessary, promoting better clinical decisions. For example, step therapy helps ensure that a senior who is newly diagnosed with a condition begins treatment with a cost-effective biosimilar before progressing to a more costly drug therapy should the initial treatment be ineffective.

A portion of the savings is directly passed on to members through a reward for participation in a Drug Management Care Coordination Program (DMCCP). Participation in a DMCCP is voluntary for the member, but all members prescribed an eligible step therapy drug will be invited to participate. The program consists of an interactive medication review and medication reconciliation, provision of education materials, and medication adherence strategies.

Effective for dates of service on or after **May 1, 2019**, Security Health Plan will implement step therapy requirements for **NEW** starts of the following drugs:

- aflibercept (Eylea®), ranibizumab (Lucentis®) and pegaptanib (Macugen®) - with bevacizumab as the preferred drug
- epoetin alfa (Epogen®, Procrit®) - with epoetin alfa-epbx (Retacrit®) as the preferred drug.

Implementation for new starts means that no beneficiaries currently receiving eligible step therapy drugs under part B will have to change their drug. Step therapy prior authorization will be managed through Security Health Plan's specialty pharmacy medication partner, Magellan. Call 1-800-424-8243; website spcustomer.magellanprovider.com