

Subject: OTC 2nd generation antihistamines

Dear Ms Titus:

3695 '01 MAY 10 A7:03

I am troubled by the recent petition by a managed care organization to re-categorize second generation antihistamines to OTC status.

It is my opinion that patients are best managed when their physicians carefully evaluate their symptoms and orchestrate their therapy. I believe that allowing patients to self-treat will lead to inferior care, leading to suboptimal symptom and disease control, a poorer quality of life, an increased loss of time from work and school, decreased productivity and an eventual increase in indirect as well as direct costs of patient care.

At present, insurance companies are not paying for non-prescription medication. Assigning OTC status to second generation antihistamines will therefore provide insurance companies with significant cost savings in prescription expenditures. However, none of this savings will be passed on to the patient who, in fact, will have to pay the entire cost of antihistamine products.

I would urge you to reject this insurance company proposal which appears to be designed to improve the profitability of managed care, but provide no recognizable benefits in terms of quality or cost of care to the patient.

Sincerely yours,

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