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# North Dakota Medicaid Pharmacy Program Quarterly News

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Fall 2008

Welcome to the Fall 2008 edition of the “North Dakota Medicaid Pharmacy Program Quarterly News,” a pharmacy newsletter presented by the North Dakota Department of Human Services and published by Health Information Designs, Inc. (HID). This newsletter is published as part of a continuing effort to keep the Medicaid provider community informed of important changes in the North Dakota Medicaid Pharmacy Program.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services has contracted with HID to review and process prior authorizations (PAs) for medications. For a current list of medications requiring a PA, as well as the necessary forms and criteria, go to [www.hidndmedicaid.com](http://www.hidndmedicaid.com), or call HID at (866) 773-0695 to have this information faxed. An important feature on this website is the NDC Drug Lookup. This will allow you to determine if an NDC is covered (effective date), price allowed and MAC pricing, copay information, and any limitations (prior authorization or quantity limits).

The Fall 2008 newsletter contains information on coverage of smoking cessation products in North Dakota. Information regarding the recent prior authorization of carisoprodol is also included in this quarter’s newsletter.

The North Dakota Pharmacy Program team appreciates your comments and suggestions regarding this newsletter. To suggest topics for inclusion, or to make comments, please contact Health Information Designs, Inc. at (334) 502-3262 or toll free at 1-800-225-6998, or email us at [info@hidinc.com](mailto:info@hidinc.com).



### Helpful Numbers

PA Help Desk                    866-773-0695  
To fax PAs                        866-254-0761  
To report adverse                800-FDA-1088  
reactions (via Med Watch)

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**Visit HID’s North Dakota Department of Human Services Prior Authorization Webpage, [www.hidndmedicaid.com](http://www.hidndmedicaid.com).**

## Smoking Cessation Products

The addiction to tobacco is extremely deadly and costly. Smoking kills more than 392,000 people in this country each year. About 20 percent of the American population smoke cigarettes and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that this addiction costs \$193 billion annually in health-related costs and lost productivity in the U.S. The Medicaid population smokes at a rate almost 60 percent higher than the general adult population so this population is especially in need of cessation coverage.

North Dakota Medicaid has recently joined forces with the Department of Health to provide free, confidential, telephone-based cessation counseling to recipients interested in quitting tobacco. Counselors will discuss the caller's readiness to quit tobacco use and help them develop a plan, which could include setting a quit date, learning how to identify triggers and learning how to deal with withdrawal symptoms and cravings. Counselors will guide recipients through the quitting process with follow-up phone calls. The Quitline has an extremely high success rate. Six months after counseling, 37.8 percent of former tobacco users are still not using tobacco.

Beginning November 15, 2008, in order to receive smoking cessation products (patches, gum, lozenges, bupropion, or Chantix<sup>®</sup>), Medicaid recipients must be signed up with the North Dakota Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669). Once a recipient is enrolled, their physician will prescribe medications recommended by the Quitline staff.

Patients will be limited to 90 days supply of therapy for patches, gum, lozenges, and bupropion, every two years. Chantix is limited to the initial 90 days of therapy with an additional 90 days allowed if the patient has continuously quit for a minimum of one month (since day 56 of therapy). The Chantix regimen will be allowed once every two years. Prior authorizations will be entered based upon the recipient's Quit Date. This means that the approval date range will be sufficient to allow recipients to pick up medications at least one week prior to their Quit Date. Compliance will be an important aspect of the patient's success.

North Dakota Medicaid hopes that providing extensive coverage of smoking cessation products, in combination with telephone counseling, will help smokers reduce their risks from the harms of prolonged use of tobacco products. Helping these smokers quit will not only add years to their lives, but it will also improve their quality of life.

### **References:**

American Lung Association; Helping Smokers Quit: State Cessation Coverage 2008.

North Dakota Department of Health. Tobacco Facts: North Dakota Tobacco Quitline. Available online at <http://www.ndhealth.gov/tobacco/Facts/Quitline.pdf>.

## Carisoprodol Prior Authorization

According to the National Drug Intelligence Center, there is evidence that individuals of all ages abuse carisoprodol. It is most commonly taken with other drugs (hydrocodone, codeine, and alcohol) to enhance its effects. In fact, abusers who use carisoprodol combined with hydrocodone claim that this produces a heroin-like effect.

When taken as prescribed, and for a short period of time, carisoprodol is generally safe and effective. However, carisoprodol is metabolized to meprobamate, a schedule IV drug with abuse potential. A study by the University of Mississippi School Of Medicine shows that using carisoprodol for more than three months increases the chances for addiction, especially in those patients with a history of substance abuse.

The Drug Abuse Warning Network has reported that ER visits by patients using carisoprodol for a non-medical use has increased in the last decade by about 60%. There were 11,200 visits reported in 2001 as compared with 17,366 visits in 2004, nearly three times the number reported from other skeletal muscle relaxants. These and other reports of abuse have prompted many states to schedule carisoprodol as a controlled substance. Currently, carisoprodol is not scheduled at the federal level, but is being monitored by the Drug Enforcement Agency, and can be reclassified as a controlled substance if warranted.

North Dakota Medicaid, based on the recommendation of the Drug Utilization Review Board, will require a prior authorization on all chronic use of products containing carisoprodol. All new prescriptions for carisoprodol will be limited to a three week supply with one refill per year. Providers of patients taking carisoprodol chronically (more than five times per year) may request an override to wean their patients over a six month period of time.

### **References:**

National Drug Intelligence Center; U.S. Department of Justice; Available online at <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic>.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration; Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2004: National Estimates of Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits. Available online at <http://DAWNinfo.samhsa.gov>.



Health Information Designs, Inc. (HID) is the most experienced and qualified provider of drug utilization review and pharmacy benefit management services in the country. We specialize in helping our clients promote clinically appropriate and cost effective prescribing, dispensing, and utilization of prescription drugs.

For over 30 years, HID has worked to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of health care through clinically rational use of prescription medication. Our clients include public and private health care plans throughout the U.S. with a combined total of over 11 million covered lives.

Health Information Designs, Inc. was founded in 1976 and is incorporated as a C Corporation in the State of Delaware. HID's initial mission was to market drug utilization review (DUR) services nationally and since its founding, has provided DUR services for clients in approximately two-thirds of the United States. HID is headquartered in Auburn, Alabama, with regional offices in Arkansas, Maryland, and Mississippi.



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