

ARKANSAS MEDICAID PROVIDER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2024

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DRUG UTILIZATION REVIEW (DUR)/DRUG REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC) BOARD UPDATE

The following will be presented during the **April 17, 2024** DUR/DRC Board meeting.

Preferred Drug List Review	Medication Assisted Treatment for OUD injections
PDL Class with Criteria (has proposed criteria changes)	Triptans, oral inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) and inhaled corticosteroids/long-acting beta agonist (ICS/LABA)
Proposed Point-of-Sale Changes	Eohilia™
Policy change	Oncology policy
Manual Review PA Criteria	Accrufer®, Adthya Thyroid®, Xolair®, Agamree®, Fabhalta®, Wainua™, Zilbrysq®, Zoryve®, Rivfloza™, Zurzuvae™, Filsuvez®, Voquezna®, Voquezna® pak

<https://ar.magellanrx.com/documents/d/arkansas/dur-drc-board-agenda-for-april-17-2024>

ARKANSAS MEDICAID DUR/DRC BOARD OPEN POSITION

The Arkansas Medicaid Drug Utilization Review Board/Drug Review Committee (DUR/DRC Board) is established under the authority of 42 U.S.C. §1396r-8(g)(3) and 42 CFR § 456.716. The Board is responsible for establishing Prospective Drug Utilization Review (ProDUR) edits, Retrospective Drug Utilization Review (RDUR) criteria, and provider educational interventions. The Board is also responsible for making recommendations to the State concerning the preferred drug list (PDL).

The Board’s mission is to improve the quality of care of Arkansas Medicaid beneficiaries receiving prescription drug benefits and conserve program funds while ensuring therapeutically and medically appropriate pharmacy care.

The Board meets quarterly on the 3rd Wednesday of January, April, July, and October from 8:30am-12:30pm. The Board is composed of actively practicing physicians and pharmacists. Currently, the Board has 1 open physician position that specializes in rare diseases. If you are interested in serving our Medicaid population, email a CV to Cindi Pearson, PharmD (DUR/DRC Coordinator) at cinnamon.pearson@dhs.arkansas.gov.

[DUR/DRC Board bylaws October 2022](#)

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HEPATITIS C CRITERIA UPDATE

Arkansas Medicaid has updated the prior authorization criteria for Hepatitis C reviews. The requirement for a certain fibrosis score, which dictates the amount of fibrosis in the liver, has been removed from the criteria. Fibrosis scores will no longer determine treatment eligibility. Also, the sobriety requirement has been removed. Each prior authorization request received will continue to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All PA requests must be from a hepatologist, gastroenterologist, infectious disease specialist, or a prescriber working under the direct supervision of one of these specialties. The updated prior authorization form can be found at the link below.

<https://ar.magellanrx.com/documents/268611/269351/Hepatitis%20C%20Virus%20Medication%20Therapy%20Request%20Form/b0b28e2d-f05a-ea1d-16a4-6c0502aa4a8d>

PAXLOVID PAXCESS PROGRAM (written by Tara Groff, PharmD)

PAXLOVID is indicated for the treatment of mild-to-moderate coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in adults who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death.

Limitations of Use

PAXLOVID is not approved for use as pre-exposure or post-exposure prophylaxis for prevention of COVID-19.

Effective 3/9/2024, Emergency Use Authorization-labeled (EUA-labeled) Paxlovid must be returned to the manufacturer or disposed of in accordance with all federal, state and local regulations. Pfizer has marketed new Paxlovid NDCs that are purchased through the pharmacy's wholesaler.

Paxlovid is available to patients with Medicaid, Medicare and the uninsured for FREE through the PAXCESS Program. The U.S. Government Patient Assistance Program is operated by Pfizer to help people without commercial insurance which includes Medicaid recipients to obtain PAXLOVID for free. We encourage pharmacies to consider enrolling qualified patients with Paxlovid prescriptions.

Visit <https://www.paxlovid.com/paxcess> for additional information and to enroll your patients in the PAXCESS Patient Portal (<https://paxcesspatientportal.com/>). Patients with commercial insurance may also qualify for a co-pay card to help reduce their costs.

Explore cost saving options with

PAXCESSTM

Patient Support Program

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ALCOHOL USE DISORDER (AUD) (written by Susana Granell-Bellmunt, RPh, PhD)

Epidemiology and Clinical Manifestations

Excessive alcohol consumption is a leading cause of premature mortality and morbidity in the United States.(1) More than 14 million adults ages 18 and older have alcohol use disorder (AUD), and 1 in 10 children (7.5 million) live in households with at least one parent with AUD.(2)

Alcohol can be a significant contributing factor to multiple health conditions both medical and psychiatric. These possible conditions include hypertension, cardiovascular disease, liver disease, dementia, diabetes complications, pancreatitis, increased risk for cancer, bone damage, and neurological complications. Psychiatric disorders caused or exacerbated by excessive alcohol consumption encompass depressive and anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, sleep disturbances and other substance use disorders.(3)

Identifying Alcohol Misuse and Screening for AUD

Despite the frequent presentation in primary care, unhealthy alcohol consumption often goes unrecognized. Screening all adult primary care patients to identify individuals with unhealthy use and a brief counseling intervention has been proposed as preventive intervention in primary care.(4) Healthcare professionals in medical or mental health fields can efficiently screen for heavy drinking as part of a comprehensive assessment or health history. As an alternative, patient self-reporting (paper/electronic questionnaire or through a patient portal) may provide more accurate answers than asking directly.

Following a positive screen, a healthcare provider can follow up and determine whether the patient has symptoms of AUD. In May 2013, the American Psychiatric Association issued the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). Under DSM-5, anyone meeting any 2 of the 11 criteria during the same 12-month period would receive a diagnosis of AUD. According to the DSM-5 criteria, AUD can be considered mild (2-3 symptoms present), moderate (4-5 symptoms) and severe (6 or more symptoms.)

1. *Alcohol is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended.*
2. *There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control alcohol use.*
3. *A great deal of time is spent on activities necessary to obtain alcohol, use alcohol, or recover from its effects.*
4. *Craving, or a strong desire or urge to use alcohol.*
5. *Recurrent alcohol use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home.*
6. *Continued alcohol use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of alcohol.*
7. *Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of alcohol use.*
8. *Recurrent alcohol use in situations in which it is physically hazardous.*
9. *Alcohol use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by alcohol.*
10. *Tolerance, as defined by either of the following:*
 - a. *A need for markedly increased amounts of alcohol to achieve intoxication or desired effect.*
 - b. *A markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of alcohol.*
11. *Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:*
 - a. *The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for alcohol (See the “How is alcohol withdrawal managed?” section for some DSM-5 symptoms of withdrawal).*
 - b. *Alcohol (or a closely related substance, such as a benzodiazepine) is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.*

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It is worthy to note that most of the patients who screen positive for heavy drinking would not have AUD. Nonetheless, all those who consume heavily warrant a brief intervention to reduce their risk of alcohol-related harm and have a positive impact on their health. Effective and thoughtful tools for brief interventions, screenings, and assessments for AUD can be found at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).(4,5)

Treatments for AUD

Approaches for AUD include behavioral health treatments, FDA-approved medications, and mutual support groups, or a combination of any of these.(6) According to the 2018 practice guidelines developed by the American Psychiatric Association, therapy selection will be largely dependent on the severity of AUD. Consequently, initial treatment for patients with **mild AUD** would consist of one or more psychosocial interventions such as brief motivational counseling and mutual help groups. For patients with **moderate or severe AUD**, treatment with a combination of both medication and behavioral interventions is usually more effective than either treatment individually.(7)

1) Behavioral Health Treatments

AUD-focused behavioral health treatment aims to help patients set goals, identify triggers, and develop skills to cope with situations that could prompt relapse. Specific AUD-focused behavioral health treatment includes cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), motivational enhancement therapy, acceptance- and mindfulness-based interventions, contingency management approaches, couples/family counseling and Twelve-step facilitation therapy.(6)

2) FDA-Approved AUD Medications

To date, three medications have been approved by the FDA to help prevent relapses: naltrexone, acamprosate and disulfiram. They are prescribed by a primary care physician or other health professional and may be used alone or in combination with the behavioral initiatives. Oral and long-acting injectable alcohol use disorder agents are preferred medications on the Medicaid pharmacy PDL without prior authorization requirements. The oral and long-acting injectable medications can be billed at point-of-sale in a pharmacy setting.

Naltrexone is considered the first line treatment. Naltrexone is a pure opioid antagonist. Opioid antagonists have been shown to reduce alcohol consumption by animals, and naltrexone hydrochloride has been shown to reduce alcohol consumption in clinical studies.(8) Naltrexone is available as once daily 50 mg oral tablet or as a monthly intramuscular injection (Vivitrol®).

Acamprosate calcium delayed-release tablets is a reasonable alternative first-line treatment in patients who have a contraindication to naltrexone. The mechanism of action of acamprosate is through interaction with glutamate and GABA neurotransmitter systems centrally restoring its balance. Acamprosate helps alleviate the emotional discomfort associated with early abstinence from alcohol. Acamprosate is indicated for the maintenance of abstinence from alcohol in patients with alcohol use disorder who are abstinent at treatment initiation. The recommended dose of acamprosate is two 333 mg tablets taken three times daily.(9)

Per UpToDate®, other second line medications include **disulfiram**, topiramate and gabapentin.(10) Disulfiram is an aversive agent that discourages drinking by causing an accumulation of alcohol's primary metabolite, acetaldehyde and causing unpleasant effects such as sweating,

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headache, flushing, nausea, and vomiting. Disulfiram should never be administered until the patient has abstained from alcohol for at least 12 hours. Topiramate and gabapentin have off-label support in the compendia and could be useful in special circumstances such as a patient with a seizure disorder that has failed first-line treatment with naltrexone or acamprosate. The addictive nature of gabapentin needs to be taken into consideration as well.

Healthcare providers considering prescribing AUD medications, can find many resources and links to recent guidelines at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) website.(6)

3) Mutual Support Group Choices

Mutual support groups provide a sense of community for those in recovery. Groups vary widely in beliefs and demographics. In addition to widely recognized 12-step programs with spiritual components such as AA, several secular groups promote abstinence as well, such as SMART Recovery, LifeRing, Women for Sobriety, Secular Organizations for Sobriety, and Secular AA.(6)

In conclusion, AUD is very common and can be life threatening if left untreated. Medicaid providers can be of great impact in improving the health status of patients by screening for AUD, creating a treatment plan and assessing if medication therapy may be appropriate.

GENERAL RESOURCES

NIAAA has developed multiple guides and resources that are available at [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) \(nih.gov\)](#)

Other resources include:

*Treatment facilities

- [Home - FindTreatment.gov](#) 1-800-662-HELP

*Mutual-support groups

- Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) [Have a problem with alcohol? There is a solution. | Alcoholics Anonymous \(aa.org\)](#) 212-870-3400
- Moderation Management [Moderation Management Non-Profit for Self-Managed Alcohol Moderation](#) 212-871-0974
- Secular AA [HOME | Secular AA \(aasecular.org\)](#)
- SMART Recovery [Home - SMART Recovery](#) 440-951-5357
- Women for Sobriety [Home - Women for Sobriety](#) 215-536-8026

* Groups for family and friends

- [Al-Anon Family Groups](#)
1-888-425-2666 for meetings

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- Adult Children of Alcoholics <https://adultchildren.org/> 310-534-1815

*Information resources

- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) \(nih.gov\)](#) 301-443-3860
- National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA.NIH.GOV | National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\)](#) 301-443-1124
- National Institute of Mental Health [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\) - Transforming the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses \(nih.gov\)](#) 1-866-615-6464

Resources at AR Medicaid DHS

When seeking help for mental health or addiction services for yourself or a loved one, the first step is to find a service provider in your area. Several state specific resources can be found at the AR Medicaid DHS website at:

- [Home - Arkansas Department of Human Services](#)
- [Find Substance Abuse or Mental Health Treatment - Arkansas Department of Human Services](#)
- [DASEP STAFF DIRECTORY.REV 1 .29.2020.pdf \(arkansas.gov\)](#)
- [DAABHS-CSAT-8-Funded-Providers-Map-and-Contact-Info .pdf \(arkansas.gov\)](#)

You may also call our Mental Health & Addiction Support Line at 1-844-763-0198 to locate providers in your area. After locating a provider in your area, you can call for immediate and confidential help 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Following the initial call, available services will vary from person to person.

If you are facing a medical emergency, please dial 911.



988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which is answered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Bibliography

- (1) [Contribution of excessive alcohol consumption to deaths and years of potential life lost in the United States - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)
- (2) [Children Living with Parents Who Have a Substance Use Disorder \(samhsa.gov\)](#)
- (3) [Risky drinking and alcohol use disorder: Epidemiology, clinical features, adverse consequences, screening, and assessment - UpToDate](#)
- (4) [Screen and Assess: Use Quick, Effective Methods | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) \(nih.gov\)](#)

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- (5) [Conduct a Brief Intervention: Build Motivation and a Plan for Change | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) \(nih.gov\)](#)
- (6) [Recommend Evidence-Based Treatment: Know the Options | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) \(nih.gov\)](#)
- (7) [The American Psychiatric Association Practice Guideline for the Pharmacological Treatment of Patients With Alcohol Use Disorder - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)
- (8) [DailyMed - NALTREXONE HYDROCHLORIDE tablet, film coated \(nih.gov\)](#)
- (9) [DailyMed - ACAMPROSATE CALCIUM- acamprosate calcium enteric-coated tablet, delayed release \(nih.gov\)](#)
- 10) [Alcohol use disorder: Pharmacologic management - UpToDate](#)
- 11) [Health Professionals & Communities | National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) \(nih.gov\)](#)

PRIME/MAGELLAN RX WEBSITE IS AN EXCELLENT RESOURCE

The Arkansas Medicaid’s pharmacy vendor, Prime/Magellan Rx, has a website which serves as the Arkansas Medicaid Portal with valuable information to help in your practices with the most up-to-date clinical documentation. <https://ar.magellanrx.com/home>. This site is a good resource for prescribers and pharmacists with access to drug information and patient information.

Many resources on the site do not even require the provider to be logged into the system, but requesting access as a provider will grant you access to more patient specific information. This patient specific information can help determine if a patient is compliant on therapy without contacting the pharmacy.

The home page has a useful announcement section with pertinent updates.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You can find the latest news items below. Scroll cards for more items.

Diabetic Supplies Update

Diabetic supplies including Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGM) will be changing to a pharmacy claim type submission by both pharmacies and DME providers in the next few months. Pharmacies will be able to be...

[View More](#)

Mar 01, 2024

Hepatitis C update

Arkansas Medicaid has updated the [prior authorization criteria](#) for Hepatitis C reviews. The requirement for a certain fibrosis score, which dictates the amount of fibrosis in the liver, has been removed from the criteria...

[View More](#)

Nov 28, 2023

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The Tools tab has a helpful drug lookup function with information on specific medications including strengths of a medication available, whether a PA is required, if the medication is included on the PDL, and if there are quantity limitations.

The screenshot shows the 'DRUG LOOKUP' tool. The search criteria are: Drug Name: IBRANCE. The results table is as follows:

Drug Name	Strength & Form	PA Required	Drug Type	PDL Status	Quantity Limitations
IBRANCE 100 MG CAPSULE	100 MG - CAPSULE	Yes	BRAND		Yes
IBRANCE 100 MG TABLET	100 MG - TABLET	Yes	BRAND		Yes

If a searched medication does not populate the table, then the medication is not covered under the pharmacy program. It may be an excluded medication or covered as a medical benefit.

The screenshot shows the 'DRUG LOOKUP' tool with search criteria: Drug Name: KEYTRUDA. The results table is empty, indicating the medication is not covered.

The Resources tab has the bulk of the information and resources for assisting your practice under provider documents and forms/documents. Below is a small portion of the options available.

The screenshot shows the 'Resources' tab with a list of provider documents:

- Antipsychotics for Beneficiaries Less Than 18 years of Age
- Arkansas Medicaid Reimbursement Methodology and NADAC
- Capped Upper Limits
- Cough and Cold List
- Covered Labelers
- Emergency Override
- Evidence-Based Prescription Drug Program (PDL)

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Important information in the Prescription Drug Information tab include:

- Updated PDL with preferred and non-preferred options for many drug classes
- PA criteria document contains approval criteria for many of the medications
- Opioid information tab has links to some helpful sites for proper opioid prescribing

The Additional Prescription Drug Information tab has documentation about our Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Board with updated meeting agendas. The Pharmacy tab contains archived memorandums which contain updates after a DUR Board meeting and upcoming changes that may impact your prescribing or dispensing functions, and the Pharmacy tab includes archived provider quarterly newsletters.

The Diabetic Supplies tab is a recent addition which helps providers to understand the updates around pharmacy type billing for diabetic supplies.

NOTE: The Prime/Magellan Rx Help Desk is always available if you need assistance.

NEW FDA APPROVED MEDICATIONS 2024	INDICATION	AR MEDICAID COVERAGE
Rivfloza™	Treat primary hyperoxaluria type 1	Manual review with criteria determined by the DUR Board
Agamree®	Treatment of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy	Manual review with criteria determined by the DUR Board
Filsuvez®	Treat dystrophic and junctional epidermolysis bullosa	Manual review with criteria determined by the DUR Board
Duvyzat™	Treat Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy	Manual review with criteria determined by the DUR Board
Winrevair™	Treat pulmonary arterial hypertension	Nonpreferred in the PAH class
Rezdiffra™	Treat noncirrhotic nonalcoholic steatohepatitis	Manual review with criteria determined by the DUR Board
Vafseo®	Anemia due to CKD	Manual review with criteria determined by the DUR Board
Opsynvi™	Treat pulmonary arterial hypertension	Nonpreferred in the PAH class
Tyenne®	Biosimilar to Actemra®	Nonpreferred in the targeted immunomodulators class
Eohilia™	Treat eosinophilic esophagitis	Point-of-sale edit looking for proper diagnosis
Simlandi®	Biosimilar to Humira®	Nonpreferred in the targeted immunomodulators class
Jubbonti®	Biosimilar to Prolia®	Nonpreferred in the osteoporosis class with Prolia® criteria
Wyost®	Biosimilar to Xgeva®	Manual review with Xgeva® criteria

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USEFUL LINKS/PHONE NUMBERS

DHS webpage

(contains official notices and other information for providers and clients)

- <https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/divisions-shared-services/medical-services/helpful-information-for-providers/>

DHS provider manuals

- <https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/divisions-shared-services/medical-services/helpful-information-for-providers/manuals/>

Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care (AFMC)

If you are having billing issues for vaccines and other medical professional claims, contact AFMC or your outreach specialist.

- <https://www.afmc.org/>
- <https://medicaid.afmc.org/services/arkansas-medicaid-management-information-system>

AFMC PHONE: 479-649-8501

AFMC FAX: 479-649-0799

DME billing assistance

Kara Orvin phone: 501-630-6064

Kara.L.Orvin@dhs.arkansas.gov

Third Party Liability (TPL) phone: 501-537-1070

Provider Assistance Center (PAC)

For questions about individual or pharmacy enrollment, please contact the provider assistance center.

Provider Assistance Center (PAC) in Arkansas: 800-457-4454

Provider Assistance Center (PAC) from out of state: 501-376-2211

Opioid guidance

- <https://arkansas.magellanrx.com/client/documents>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/pubs/2019-cdc-drug-surveillance-report.pdf>
- The Dangers Of Mixing Benzodiazepines With Opiates - Opioid Treatment
- <https://www.rehabs.com/blog/the-polypharmacy-overdose-a-killer-trend/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/featured-topics/abuse-prevention-awareness.html>

DUR BOARD MEETING DATES

- April 17, 2024
- July 17, 2024
- October 16, 2024
- January 15, 2025
- April 16, 2025