

Department of Medical Assistance Services  
Process for Acting of Recommendations of the  
Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee

As required by the 2003 Appropriations Act, “the Department shall establish a process for acting on the recommendations made by the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, including documentation of any decisions, which deviate from the recommendations of the Committee.”

The Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, shall receive and review clinical and pricing data related to the drug classes. The Committee’s medical and pharmacy experts shall make recommendations to DMAS regarding various aspects of the pharmacy program.

For the preferred drug list program, the Committee shall select those drugs to be deemed preferred that are safe, clinically effective, as supported by available clinical data, and meet pricing standards. Cost-effectiveness or any pricing standard shall be considered only after a drug is determined to be safe and clinically effective.

The Committee shall recommend to the Department:

- Which therapeutic classes of drugs should be subject to the preferred drug list program and prior authorization requirements;
- Specific drugs within each therapeutic class to be included on the preferred drug list;
- Appropriate exclusions for medications, including atypical anti-psychotics, used for the treatment of serious mental illnesses such as bi-polar disorders, schizophrenia, and depression;
- Appropriate exclusions for medications used for the treatment of brain disorders, cancer and HIV-related conditions;
- Appropriate exclusions for therapeutic classes in which there is only one drug in the therapeutic class or there is very low utilization, or for which it is not cost-effective to include in the preferred drug list program;
- Appropriate grandfather clauses when prior authorization would interfere with established complex drug regimens that have proven to be clinically effective;
- Other clinical criteria that may be included in the pharmacy program; and
- Guidance and recommendations regarding the Department’s pharmacy programs.

The Department may accept or reject the recommendations in whole or in part, and may amend or add to the recommendations. Any recommendations made by the Committee and amended or rejected by the Department shall be reported to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees and the Joint Commission on Health Care.

As outlined in the regulations governing the Preferred Drug List (PDL) Program, in formulating its recommendations to the Department, the Committee shall not be deemed to be formulating regulations for the purposes of the Administrative Process Act (§2.2-4000 et seq. of the Code of Virginia).