



## STEP THERAPY

# Promoting clinically appropriate, cost-effective medications.

## What is generic first step therapy?

**Step therapy** is a clinical tool used in your prescription benefit to promote the use of safe, effective and clinically appropriate medications. **Generic first step therapy** programs require that patients try a generic alternative medication that is safe and equally effective before a brand name medication is allowed to be paid through the patient's insurance.

If a patient chooses the generic medication option, the patient may benefit by having a lower copay. The employer may also benefit because the overall cost of the generic medication is usually lower than the brand medication option.

## How does step therapy work?

When filling prescriptions for patients, the pharmacist runs the prescription through the system. If the patient history shows that the generic drug was previously dispensed, then the brand or higher cost medication can be dispensed.

However, if there is no record of a generic drug being dispensed previously, then the patient must try the generic first or go through the prior authorization process.

Prior authorization is a process where the doctor submits a medication request form stating the reason why the patient must have the brand name drug filled at the pharmacy, without going through the step therapy process.

Step therapy and prior authorization are clinical tools that balance patient access to appropriate medications, appropriate

medication utilization, and cost savings for the patient and for the employer.

If a patient is currently taking the medication and has a history of compliance within the past 4-6 months, the patient will be "grandfathered" in to the medication and will not experience disruption. The length of compliance history for grandfathered medications depends on the medication's drug class.

Not all medications are included in the step therapy program. For specific information on your prescription benefit, please visit the member website at [www.medimpact.com/members](http://www.medimpact.com/members) or ask your employee benefits administrator.

For more information on this process, contact us at (800) 788-2949 or [www.medimpact.com/members](http://www.medimpact.com/members)