

| SECTION        | SUBJECT                       | PAGE     |    |    |    |
|----------------|-------------------------------|----------|----|----|----|
| HIGH COST DRUG | High Cost Drug Use Conditions | 1 of 2   |    |    |    |
|                |                               | YY       | MM | DD |    |
|                |                               | Original | 98 | 11 | 20 |
|                |                               | Revised  | 07 | 05 | 04 |
|                | Revised                       | 08       | 01 | 31 |    |

**PURPOSE**

To fund designated expensive drugs, doses or facility drug use (i.e. donepezil) under specific use criteria.

**DEFINITION**

High cost medications or doses are defined as those agents which are expensive, have a low potential for use and/or generate excessive cost.

New drugs with unique pharmacology and therapeutic applications are often expensive drug therapies.

Funding is provided when the high cost drug use criteria and, when applicable, the monitoring protocol for assessing therapeutic effectiveness for an individual medication is met. Funding will not be provided or will cease if the high cost use conditions and/or monitoring protocol are not satisfied.

Requests to the physician and/or pharmacy provider for documentation to ensure compliance with the use criteria may be made at any time during the High Cost Drug (HCD) funding process.

High cost drugs may be necessary when:

1. Other less expensive pharmacologically or therapeutically similar products have been tried unsuccessfully
2. Specific laboratory or medical investigations indicate that the drug is the clear agent of choice
3. Consultation with a physician, specialized in the diagnosis and treatment of a condition, results in recommendations for utilization of a high cost drug.

**MONITORING**

High cost drug utilization will be monitored, by the Supported Living Services Clinical Pharmacist and/or the Long Term Care Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee to ensure compliance with the high cost drug use conditions and/or the monitoring protocol.

Clear evidence of clinical efficacy will be required to determine the ongoing need for and funding of a high cost drug. Requests to the physician and/or pharmacy provider for documentation that identifies drug outcome and clinical efficacy may be made at the discretion of the Supported Living Services Clinical Pharmacist or Long Term Care Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee.

The monitoring protocol for an individual drug, as outlined under the use criteria, must be complied with for funding eligibility.

| SECTION        | SUBJECT                       | PAGE     |          |          |
|----------------|-------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| HIGH COST DRUG | High Cost Drug Use Conditions | 2 of 2   |          |          |
|                | Original                      | YY<br>98 | MM<br>11 | DD<br>20 |
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**PROCEDURE**

1. With a physician’s order for a high cost drug, the physician and pharmacy provider ensure compliance with the use criteria.

Referral to the Supported Living Services Clinical Pharmacist and/or Chairperson of the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee is required in situations where mutual agreement, on compliance with the use criteria between the physician and/or facility Site Leader Medical and the pharmacy provider, is not attained.

2. Pharmacy provider completes the High Cost Drug Funding Request form and forwards by email to [cc.drugmanagement@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:cc.drugmanagement@albertahealthservices.ca) OR the Physician via fax to 943-0232.

The form is retained on the patient’s health record. **Funding approval by Alberta Health Services is not required prior to drug provision.**

3. Pharmacy provider will complete the Drug cost Report and Invoice and forward it to the Calgary Health Region as per the processing instructions on the bottom of the form.
4. AHJS will fund the acquisition cost(s), for drugs on the High Cost Drug List, which have been utilized in accordance with the High Cost Drug Use Conditions.
5. Annual submission, from the date of drug provision, is required for all Non-Formulary, Special Authorization and High Cost Drug utilization. This is to allow for review, by the Supported Living Services Clinical Pharmacist and /or the Long Term Care Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee, to ensure compliance with Formulary guidelines and where appropriate to assess drug outcomes.

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