

OHIP+ (Children and Youth Pharmacare) set to launch January 1, 2018

Starting January 1, 2018, all Ontario children and youth age 24 and under who have OHIP coverage – regardless of income, family or student status – will automatically be covered under the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program, without any co-pays or deductibles. OHIP+ gives Ontario children and youth access to more than 4,400 drugs. Drugs eligible under group plans but not covered by OHIP+ will continue to be reimbursed under the group plans.

The program will act as the **primary payor** (whether or not private coverage exists) providing full reimbursement of the eligible drug. In addition, drugs under the ODB **Exceptional Access Program (EAP)**, which includes a number of high cost drugs, will be covered under the OHIP+ program. Ontario children and youth under 25 taking a drug eligible for funding through the EAP, will need to apply to ODB for coverage of the EAP drug. We recommend that they ask their doctor to submit an EAP request form now to avoid interruption of coverage on January 1, 2018.

A transition period is planned for some Exceptional Access Program drugs. Children/youth who take a drug belonging to one of the three categories below will have until June 30, 2018, to obtain approval from the Ministry.

- Antibiotics (and anti-infectives, including antiviral and antifungal agents)
- Blood thinners (low molecular weight heparins)
- Drugs with low Exceptional Access Program approval rates

During this time, the above categories of drugs will be reimbursed as per the contractual criteria in the plan member's group insurance plan, without requiring proof of the Ministry's refusal. As of July 1, 2018, insurers will only cover these EAP eligible drugs upon proof of EAP denial and subject to plan design limitations.

Please note that out-of-country and out-of-province claims are not eligible for coverage under the OHIP+ program, as well as medical and paramedical expenses, and these will continue to be reimbursed by private plans, subject to plan eligibility.

Impact to Group Plans

Final details of the OHIP+ program continue to unfold and the impact this program will have on drug claims under Health plans is not yet fully understood. Insurers are still finalizing their approach and we will keep you up to date on any changes to rates.