



# THE advantage™

THE STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW...

JULY 2015

## Green Shield Canada introduces a preferred pharmacy network (PPN) for specialty drugs

The pharmaceutical industry is changing with an increasing number of biologic and specialty drugs being introduced to market. This new drug technology is revolutionizing how many serious medical conditions are being treated and is changing plan members' lives for the better. However, these typically high-cost specialty drugs are posing a significant financial challenge for private and public drug plans in Canada. With the development of these drugs not expected to slow down any time soon, specialty drugs will continue to impact your drug plan costs for the foreseeable future. In keeping with our commitment to provide innovative solutions in pharmacy benefit management, GSC is introducing a preferred pharmacy network (PPN) for specialty drugs starting on **August 31, 2015**. Our specialty drug PPN will limit the financial impact of these high-cost specialty drugs on your plan and ensure your plan members taking these drugs receive the treatment support they need.

It is important to have perspective on these costs and the employee population that produces them. While GSC administers drug claims for over 1.9 million Canadians, only 4,900 use specialty drugs that will be part of the PPN. So while the financial impact of a PPN is large, the disruption to the plan member population is very small.

### OVERVIEW

#### About the specialty drug PPN

GSC has partnered with HealthForward, a subsidiary of AmerisourceBergen Canada, an industry leader with extensive specialty medication experience. Our GSC pharmacy team has designed the program and chosen the participating pharmacies to get the best value for you and your plan members.

HealthForward will help deliver GSC's specialty drug PPN program by managing the network of participating pharmacies, coordinating specialty drug access with plan members, providing adherence support services, and communicating with prescribing health care providers. GSC is responsible for the overall management of the PPN and will continue to administer all prior authorization coverage decisions.

Unique in the industry, GSC's specialty drug PPN is custom tailored to our plan sponsors' needs, strategically focused on maximizing financial impact for your drug plan and meeting the support needs of plan members.

#### How does the PPN work?

All the specialty drugs included on the PPN require prior authorization from GSC before a claim can be reimbursed. Starting August 31st, plan members who are approved for a PPN specialty drug will be automatically enrolled in the

PPN program and contacted by a care coordinator from HealthForward. Care coordinators provide personalized support, with a focus on adherence, and also help plan members find an approved network pharmacy in their community.

Plan members will be required to obtain their PPN specialty drug at an approved network pharmacy to receive reimbursement under their drug plan. If the plan member chooses to go to a pharmacy that has not been approved, their claim will not be reimbursed.

### Which pharmacies are included in the PPN?

Our specialty pharmacy network includes many familiar chain pharmacies and a few independents (in remote and rural areas), conveniently located across Canada, excluding Quebec. (More on Quebec later). Every pharmacy in the network also offers home or clinic delivery services. The network pharmacies include:

- Shoppers Drug Mart and Shoppers Specialty Health Network
- Loblaws (chains with pharmacies owned by Loblaws, including Zehrs, No Frills, Real Canadian Superstore).
- Safeway
- Lawtons Drugs
- Sobeys
- And some independent pharmacies in rural and remote areas
- Outpatient pharmacies in select regional cancer centres

## REDUCED CLAIM COSTS

### How will the PPN lower my drug plan costs?

The participating network pharmacies have agreed to reduce their pharmacy markup for the specialty drugs included in the PPN, which means a reduction in your overall drug plan costs. A markup is the cost charged by pharmacies for the acquiring and handling the drug product.

### What about my plan members? Will they benefit from reduced drug costs?

Depending on your drug plan, plan members will see reduced out-of-pocket costs as a result of a lower pharmacy markup. Plan members will also be encouraged by the case coordinator to enrol in any available patient assistance programs run by the manufacturer of the drug, which may further reduce their out-of-pocket costs. HealthForward will help coordinate drug access and reimbursement with the PPN pharmacy, patient assistance program(s) if applicable, and the plan member.

## ADHERENCE SUPPORT SERVICES – STICK2IT

### Are there any other benefits for my plan members?

The drug therapy regimens for specialty drugs can be costly and complex, and many patients find it challenging to adhere to treatment. And you know that GSC has been a vocal advocate of improving plan member adherence to improve health outcomes and reduce waste in the system. Plan members who are approved for a PPN specialty drug will be offered adherence support services, a program that offers personalized coaching, resources, and ongoing monitoring during treatment. They will also be pointed to our Change4Life™ health portal where they can set reminders for themselves.

The adherence support program is voluntary. If a plan member does not wish to participate in the adherence support program, their drug claim will still be approved as long as they obtain their drug at a participating pharmacy.

## PLAN MEMBER COMMUNICATION

### How is GSC communicating to plan members about the specialty drug PPN?

#### Plan members currently taking a PPN specialty drug (prior to August 31, 2015)

Starting at the end of July, we will be sending a detailed letter to plan members who are currently taking one of the specialty drugs included in the PPN:

- Plan members who already have their prescription at a PPN pharmacy will be advised to contact HealthForward to confirm that they will stay at their current pharmacy, and will be offered adherence support services.
- Plan members who have their prescription at a non-PPN pharmacy will be required to bring their next prescription or refill to a PPN pharmacy. HealthForward will assist them in this transition.

#### Plan members newly starting a PPN specialty drug (after August 31, 2015)

New plan members approved for a PPN specialty drug through GSC's prior authorization program after August 31st will automatically be enrolled in the PPN program. Once the plan member's special authorization request is approved, a HealthForward case coordinator will call the plan member to introduce them to the specialty drug PPN program and identify approved network pharmacies in their community. HealthForward will also offer the plan member the opportunity to participate in adherence support services.

## PLAN MEMBER EXPERIENCE

### How will my plan members know which pharmacies are part of the PPN?

HealthForward will be calling plan members to let them know which pharmacies are part of the PPN. Plan members can also call HealthForward for this information. The HealthForward case coordinator will work with plan members to locate the closest, convenient and approved network pharmacy. HealthForward will also work with the pharmacy to facilitate the drug order, including delivering the drug to their home or infusion clinic if required.

### What is the plan member experience going to be at the pharmacy?

Plan members will simply present their GSC ID card at their participating pharmacy and the claim will be processed through the pharmacy's online drug claim system as per usual. The pharmacy markup will automatically be reduced – there's no additional step for the plan member to take advantage of the reduced claim costs.

### What happens if a plan member uses a pharmacy outside of the network?

If a plan member uses a non-PPN pharmacy to obtain their specialty drug, the claim will not be reimbursed under their drug plan. Plan members must get their drug at an approved network pharmacy in order to have their claim paid.

### How do plan members know if their specialty drug is included on the PPN?

Plan members can see if their specialty drug is included on the PPN by using the online drug search tool available through their Plan Member Online Services account. They can also use their mobile device to check the status of their drug using Drugs on the Go™ on GSC on the Go™, our mobile app. Plan members who do not have access to Plan Member Online Services or the app can call GSC's Customer Service Centre.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### How is GSC's specialty drug PPN being rolled out to plan sponsors?

On August 31, 2015, GSC's specialty drug PPN will be applied as a standard offering to all GSC plans. We are confident that GSC's specialty drug PPN will help protect the financial sustainability of your drug plan and ensure that the specialty drugs on the PPN remain affordable and accessible to your plan members in the long-term.

### **Which plan sponsors will receive the specialty drug PPN?**

GSC's specialty drug PPN will be applied to pay-direct drug (PDD) plans and deferred drug plans. Plans with reimbursement drug plans will not be part of the specialty drug PPN.

### **Is the GSC specialty drug PPN available in Quebec?**

No. Quebec legislation prevents pharmacies in Quebec from participating in a preferred provider network.

If you are a Quebec-based client with plan members resident in Quebec only, the PPN will not be available to any of your plan members.

If you are a national client with plan members based in Quebec, the PPN will not be available to your Quebec-based plan members. The PPN will be available to your non-Quebec plan members.

### **Can I opt out of the PPN?**

We strongly encourage you to speak to your GSC account team about the benefits of GSC's specialty drug PPN and potential cost impact to your plan. They will have access to information on the impact of the PPN and the number of plan members who will be impacted. Please speak to a member of your GSC account team before July 31, 2015.