

BCBSAZ adjusts tier status for albuterol sulfate HFA inhalers

 pages.azblue.com/Generic-asthma-inhaler-lowers-member-cost---APR-2021.html

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For prescriptions filled on or after January 28, 2021, albuterol sulfate HFA is available at the lowest cost-share level (tier 1/generic) for Blue Cross® Blue Shield® of Arizona (BCBSAZ) members with fully insured and self-funded group plans. We now consider generic albuterol to be preferred for these benefit plans. It does not require prior authorization or step therapy using other medications.

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If your patient is using an albuterol inhaler more than twice a week, it might be time to consider adding a controller medication or intensifying therapy.

Albuterol is a bronchodilator that is often used for:

- Opening the airways in lung diseases where spasm may cause breathing problems
- Preventing breathing problems that happen with exercise

Generic helps reduce member cost share

BCBSAZ's shift to the generic albuterol as preferred enables members to pay less at the pharmacy for a medication that helps them stay healthy. To further support this positive change over the next six to nine months, we'll be moving the higher-cost branded products (ProAir® HFA, ProAir Digihaler®, ProAir

RespiClick®, Ventolin HFA, and Proventil HFA) to the highest retail member cost-share level or tier. In addition, this drug will become a mandatory generic in applicable benefit plans. Approval for the branded albuterol products may require trial/failure of the preferred generic or prior authorization for an exception.

What about members with other types of benefit plans?

Here is the coverage and tier-level status of albuterol sulfate HFA for members with the following types of plans:

- Federal Employee Program® (FEP®) plans – Generic albuterol is currently \$5.00 for a 30-day supply (see Rx costs at fepblue.org/pilot/rx-cost-tool/search)
- Medicare Advantage plans – Generic albuterol is currently tier 2; coverage and tier level varies for brand-name products
- Out-of-area BlueCard® plans – Coverage and tier level varies according to the member's BCBS Plan requirements
- Corporate Health Services (CHS) group plans – Coverage and tier level varies according to third-party administrator (TPA) requirements
- BCBSAZ-TPA co-administered group plans – Coverage and tier level varies according to TPA requirements

Please help us lower treatment costs for our members by prescribing generic albuterol when appropriate. For asthma/allergy patient education materials, visit the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America [programs page](#).

If you have questions about this medication tier-status change, you can contact your [provider liaison](#) or call Provider Partnerships at 602-864-4231 or 1-800-232-2345, ext. 4231.

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