

Medication sourcing protocol – Requirements to use a participating specialty pharmacy for certain medications

UnitedHealthcare commercial plans

Overview

Participating outpatient providers are required to obtain certain drugs from indicated specialty pharmacies unless otherwise authorized by UnitedHealthcare. The table below includes drugs that require sourcing for all outpatient places of service and/or drugs only requiring sourcing administered in the outpatient hospital setting. When one of these medications is appropriately obtained through the indicated specialty pharmacy, the specialty pharmacy will bill UnitedHealthcare directly for the drug under the member's medical benefit. Outpatient providers may only seek reimbursement for administering the medication. Outpatient providers may not bill the member for the medication.

Effective for dates of service on or after April 1, 2025 – Outpatient hospital only

Medication	Therapeutic class	Code	Specialty pharmacy
PiaSky™	Blood modifying agents	J1307	Accredo Health Group
Tofidence™	Inflammatory conditions	Q5133	Amber Specialty Pharmacy
Tyenne®	Inflammatory conditions	Q5135	Amber Specialty Pharmacy

Disclaimer: Inclusion in this list does not indicate a drug is covered by a particular plan. Any drug may be subject to other requirements, including but not limited to Review at Launch and/or Medical Benefit Therapeutic Equivalent Medications - Drug Exclusion.

The complete list of drugs that are subject to the requirement to obtain certain drugs from indicated specialty pharmacies unless otherwise authorized by UnitedHealthcare for commercial plans can be found in our [Medication Sourcing Protocol](#). Please note, these lists are subject to change.

Frequently asked questions

What is the requirement to use a participating specialty pharmacy provider for certain medications?

This protocol requires specialty drugs listed to be sourced through an indicated specialty pharmacy. This specialty pharmacy requirement has been in place for over a decade for commercial plans and is outlined in the UnitedHealthcare Administrative Guide policy titled, “Requirement to Use a Participating Specialty Pharmacy Provider for Certain Medications,” although drugs have been added to the existing requirement, as identified at the bottom of this document. Information about the requirement and applicable drug list is available on our [Specialty Pharmacy – Medical Benefit Management](#) page.

The protocol includes drugs that require sourcing for all outpatient places of service. Most of the drugs only require sourcing administered in the outpatient hospital setting of participating hospitals, as outlined in the [specialty pharmacy requirements drug list](#).

- The protocol does not apply to chemotherapy drugs to treat cancer
- Applies to drugs supplied under the member’s medical benefit
- Does not apply to drugs supplied under the member’s pharmacy benefit
- Does not apply when Medicare or another health benefit plan is the primary payer and UnitedHealthcare is the secondary payer
- Does not apply when Medicare or Medicaid is the secondary payer and UnitedHealthcare is the primary payer
- Is subject to applicable state laws and regulations

Which plans does this apply to?

This specialty pharmacy requirement applies to UnitedHealthcare commercial plans, including but not limited to:

- UnitedHealthcare of the River Valley
- Neighborhood Health Partnership
- All Savers
- UnitedHealthcare of the Mid-Atlantic plans
- UnitedHealthcare Oxford
- UnitedHealthcare Freedom Plan

Currently, the requirement does not apply to:

- UnitedHealthcare West
- Sierra plans
- UnitedHealth One
- UMR
- UnitedHealthcare Individual Exchange plans (also referred to as UnitedHealthcare Individual & Family ACA Marketplace plans)
- Student Resources



For drugs that require sourcing when administered in outpatient facilities, physician offices, and home and ambulatory infusion, the following states and U.S. territories are excluded from the requirements at this time. All other states and U.S. territories are included.

- Maryland
- Louisiana – The requirements do not apply for some commercial plan members

For drugs that require sourcing when administered in outpatient hospitals only, the following states and U.S. territories are excluded from the requirements at this time. All other states and U.S. territories are included.

- Alaska
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Rhode Island
- Louisiana – The requirements do not apply for some commercial plan members

Does UnitedHealthcare ever remove drugs from the medication sourcing protocol list?

Yes, drugs may be removed from the sourcing requirement list at any time.

Why are there multiple specialty pharmacies for most drugs on the list?

The required specialty pharmacy may vary based on the medication, but in most instances, we include at least 1 or more nationally accredited specialty pharmacies. This allows our care providers multiple specialty pharmacy options. In addition, all of our participating specialty pharmacies provide fulfillment and distribution services to meet the needs of our members and our care providers.

How will the specialty pharmacy be chosen if there are multiple specialty pharmacies listed for a drug?

The specialty pharmacy is selected by the prescribing physician. Participating specialty pharmacies can supply the drug to the physician and hospital to administer.

Are the specialty pharmacies prepared to support this requirement?

Yes. Specialty pharmacies currently provide these drugs to physicians and hospitals, effectively supporting the member and provider experience.

What is the difference between “white bagging” and “brown bagging” and what is the UnitedHealthcare policy on brown bagging?

“White bagging” means the drug is purchased through a specialty pharmacy and shipped to the provider’s office, hospital or infusion facility for administration. “Brown bagging” means the drug is purchased through a specialty pharmacy and shipped directly to the patient, who takes it to the provider’s office for administration. UnitedHealthcare does not support brown bagging as part of the medication sourcing requirement.

How are outpatient providers reimbursed?

When a specialty drug is obtained through one of the indicated specialty pharmacies, the pharmacy will bill UnitedHealthcare directly for the medications under the member's medical benefit. The specialty pharmacy will advise the member of any medical cost-share responsibility and arrange for the collection of it. When submitting a claim for reimbursement, outpatient providers:

- May only bill for the appropriate code to administer the medication
- May not bill members for the medication
- May not bill UnitedHealthcare for the medication

We anticipate that all providers will be able to source the specialty drug administered in an outpatient setting from an indicated specialty pharmacy. In the event a provider doesn't obtain the specialty drug through an indicated specialty pharmacy, UnitedHealthcare will deny payment for the medication, because the protocol hasn't been followed. Providers may not bill members for medication that is denied when the protocol hasn't been followed.

Where can a health care professional submit or check on the status of a specialty drug request?

You can access the specialty pharmacy transaction tool in the UnitedHealthcare Provider Portal:

- Sign into the portal – Go to UHCprovider.com and select Sign In in the upper-right corner
- Sign in with your One Healthcare ID and password. If you don't have a One Healthcare ID, visit UHCprovider.com/access to get started.
- In the menu, select **Prior Authorization**
- For specialty drugs, under **specialty-specific resources**, click Submission & Status. Then follow the prompts.
- You may also call **888-397-8129** for help with a prior authorization

Questions?

If you have questions, please contact your provider advocate.

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