

Obtaining Prescriptions for Over the Counter Medications Patient Information

Patients who have Health Savings Accounts (HSA) or Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) may wish to use funds in these accounts to pay for certain medical expenses with pre-tax dollars. Prior to December 31, 2010, over-the-counter medications could be purchased with these funds with no restrictions. However, a new IRS regulation now requires a formal prescription in order to buy medications with HSA or FSA money. This new regulation does not apply to equipment such as crutches or supplies such as bandages, which do not require prescriptions.

We want to give our patients every opportunity to utilize their HSA or FSA accounts. However, medical providers must follow rules about writing prescriptions. These rules are based on the legal description of what is required of a prescriber. As a result, the following policy will apply to requests for prescriptions for over-the-counter medications:

- Prescriptions for over-the-counter medications will be written during an office visit for the condition requiring the prescriptions.
- We cannot write prescriptions for conditions we did not personally diagnose and treat.
- We will not write prescriptions for previously-purchased medications; that is, we will not back-date prescriptions.
- We will write current or future prescriptions for over the counter medications that were recommended at previous office visits for ongoing conditions. For example: antihistamines for allergy, laxatives for constipation. Requests for these prescriptions will be handled according to medication refill timeframe guidelines and may have to be picked up or submitted at a later time.
- We will not write prescriptions for alternative or herbal medicine remedies that we did not recommend at an office visit.