

ALAMEDA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH

# PROVIDER BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 2007

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## Asthma Care – Albuterol Availability and Using Controller Medication

*This is an important message about asthma medications from the Alliance Chief Medical Officer, Arthur Chen, MD, and Alliance Manager of Pharmacy Services, Anna Yang, Pharm.D.*

The Federal Drug Administration has ruled that ozone-depleting substances (ODSs) used as propellants in medical products must be replaced with new formulations by December 31, 2008. This regulation will affect only albuterol inhalers for now. As the pharmaceutical companies comply with this change, there has been a shortage in the supply of albuterol inhalers. New formulations of albuterol inhaler are “brand name” (not generic) drugs, which will significantly increase the cost.

Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance) has discussed this situation and is responding in the following way:

1. At the December 2006 Alliance Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee meeting, the following received approval:
  - ProAir HFA and Ventolin HFA will be on the Alliance Formulary
  - There is a quantity limit of 2 units/45 day supply

Prescribing tips for albuterol:

- The old formulation of albuterol and the new formulation are not substitutable
  - Write “**albuterol HFA**” rather than ProAir HFA or Ventolin HFA on the prescription in case there is a shortage of either one at a particular pharmacy
2. We encourage physicians to emphasize the importance of controller medication to patients who are on them. A recent survey of Alliance parents of asthmatic children showed high incidence of nighttime cough in the absence of other reasons for cough. This is a very good indication of uncontrolled asthma. Please ask your patients about night coughing. If parents report night coughing, please check to see that your patient is getting correct deposition of the controller drug. If the patient is using the inhaler correctly, but is still experiencing night coughing, they may need a higher dosage. We encourage you to treat asthma aggressively with controller medications and step down the dosage as improvement and control are achieved.
  3. We also encourage physicians to ensure that asthmatic patients get a flu shot.

If you have any questions, please call the Alliance Pharmacy department at (510) 747-4541.

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## National Provider Identifier Requirement

In compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), all providers who complete electronic transactions must obtain a National Provider Identifier (NPI). As permitted under HIPAA, the Alliance requires that contracted providers obtain and report NPIs to us for both paper claims and electronic submissions.

**Providers should apply for an NPI now and give it to the Alliance to prepare for the May 23, 2007 compliance deadline.**

Have you applied for and/or obtained a National Provider Identifier (NPI)?

- If you have, please inform the Alliance Provider Services department at (510) 747-4510 as soon as possible.
- If you have not, you may apply for an NPI by mail or online.
  - To apply for an NPI online, visit [www.nppes.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.nppes.cms.hhs.gov). The online process takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.
  - To obtain an NPI application by mail, please contact the NPI Enumerator at 1-800-465-3203 or TTY 1-800-692-2326.

To learn more about the National Provider Identifier, please visit the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) website at: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/>. You can call the Alliance Provider Services department at (510) 747-4510 to request assistance.

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## Requesting Interpreter Services Just Got Easier!

To ensure that our members' right to request communication in their preferred language is honored at all key points of contact, the Alliance has made the process for requesting interpreter services easier for physicians and their staff. Offices no longer have to contact the Alliance to request services for our members. Requests can be made directly to our interpreter vendor. Key points of contact include:

- Telephone advice and after hours answering service
- Urgent care settings
- Outpatient encounters with any health care provider
- Pharmacies
- Health education classes
- Appointment scheduling

**Face to face and telephonic interpreter services are FREE and accessible 24-hours per day, 7 days per week, to all Alliance members.** If your patient requests family members or friends to interpret for them, the request must be documented in writing in the patient's medical chart. Minors should not be used to interpret for anyone.

*To request interpreter services, please follow the steps below:*

### Telephonic Interpreter Services

1. Check patient's eligibility. The patient must be an Alliance member.
2. Call (510) 257-5995 to request telephonic services

### Face-to-Face (including American Sign Language) Interpreter Services

1. Check patient's eligibility. The patient must be an Alliance member.
2. Complete the "Interpreter Request Form" (attached)
3. Fax request to (415) 788-4829 or call (510) 257-5995
4. Confirmation of your request will be sent to you via e-mail or fax

Please make copies of the Interpreter Request Form and place it in a convenient, ready to access, location. Office staff should be informed of the process for requesting interpreter services.

Our interpreter vendor is International Effectiveness Center (ICE). Their professional interpreters are trained in medical interpreting, medical terminology, and ethics of medical interpreting.

Please call the Alliance Provider Services department at (510) 747-4510 if you have questions.



**INTERNATIONAL  
EFFECTIVENESS  
CENTER** Since 1972

360 Pine Street, 3rd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
Tel: (510) 257-5995  
Fax: (415) 788-4829  
Email: iec@ie-center.com

Client: **Alameda Alliance**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### INTERPRETER REQUEST FORM

#### PROVIDER INFORMATION

Provider \_\_\_\_\_

Date Needed \_\_\_\_\_

Provider ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Time Requested \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

American Sign Language

Requested By \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Instructions**

Prefer interpreter to be:

Male  Female

Request Specific interpreter:  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### LOCATION SITE INFORMATION:

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR URGENT INTERPRETER SERVICES, ELIGIBILITY MUST BE CONFIRMED BY PROVIDER.**

Member ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

ALAMEDA ALLIANCE USE ONLY:

\_\_\_\_\_

Case#: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

#### IEC Office Use Only:

Interpreter: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFIRMED BY IEC**

Time Started: \_\_\_\_\_

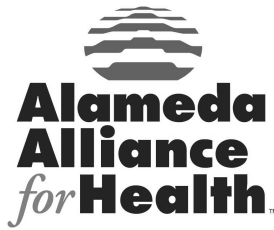
# of hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Ended: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate per hour: \_\_\_\_\_

Charges: \_\_\_\_\_

☞ CONTACT INFORMATION ☞



1240 South Loop Road  
Alameda, California 94502

[providerservices@alamedaalliance.org](mailto:providerservices@alamedaalliance.org)

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.ALAMEDAALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.ALAMEDAALLIANCE.ORG)

**USING THE ONLINE  
PROVIDER CONNECTION,  
ALLIANCE PROVIDERS CAN:**

- ▶ Verify member eligibility
- ▶ Check authorization/claim status
- ▶ View an online provider manual

To use the online Provider Connection, you will need to obtain a provider account.

Log on to [www.alamedaalliance.org](http://www.alamedaalliance.org) and click on "Provider Connection."

Follow the online instructions on how to set up an account.

If you have problems accessing the Web connection, call (510) 747-4510 or e-mail [providerservices@alamedaalliance.org](mailto:providerservices@alamedaalliance.org).

<b>Eligibility</b> (24-hour automated line).....	(510) 747-4505
<b>Authorizations</b> (provider use only).....	(510) 747-4540
	<b>fax (510) 747-4507</b>
<b>Case Management Services</b> .....	(510) 747-4540
<i>Asthma and Diabetes</i>	
<b>Claims</b> .....	(510) 747-4530
	<b>fax (510) 747-4506</b>
<b>Member Services</b> (8 a.m. – 6 p.m., M-F).....	(510) 747-4567
<b>Provider Credentialing</b> .....	(510) 747-4555 Ext 4025
<b>Provider Services General Information</b> .....	(510) 747-4510
	<b>fax (510) 747-4508</b>
<b>Provider Services Representatives:</b>	
<b>Lorena Ahumada</b> .....	(510) 747-4511
<i>(Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Oakland, and San Leandro)</i>	
<b>Kreshenda Jenkins</b> .....	(510) 747-4513
<i>(San Lorenzo, Castro Valley, Hayward, Union City, Newark, Fremont, Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore, and Sunol)</i>	
<b>Toby Wilson</b> .....	(510) 747-4512
<i>(Facility Site Review and Internal Liaison)</i>	
Interpreter Services.....	(510) 257-5995
Alameda County Behavioral Health.....	(800) 491-9099
Children First Medical Group.....	(510) 428-3489
Community Health Center Network.....	(510) 769-2200
MedImpact (Pharmacy Benefit Manager).....	(800) 788-2949
Delta Dental.....	(800) 338-4337
Denti-Cal.....	(800) 322-6384
Domestic Violence Hotline.....	(510) 536-7233
Healthy Families Program.....	(800) 880-5305
<b>PacifiCare Behavioral Health:</b>	
Physician Consultation.....	(800) 292-2922
Member Referral.....	(888) 789-7110
Quest Diagnostic (Outpatient Laboratory Services).....	(800) 288-8008
Vision Services Plan (VSP) .....	(800) 877-7195