

Dear Provider:

After consideration by the Maryland Physicians Care Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committee, we would like to inform you of a change on the Preferred Drug List (PDL). Effective June 1, 2010, generic propoxyphene and propoxyphene-containing combinations will be non-formulary and require prior authorization for Maryland Physicians Care.

- Maryland Physicians Care will grandfather all members currently on generic propoxyphene and propoxyphene-containing combination therapy.
- Preferred drug list alternatives include: tramadol, ibuprofen, or naproxen. Please refer to Maryland Physicians Care PDL for a list of other formulary alternatives:  
[http://www.marylandphysicianscare.com/pdf/MPC\\_Formulary.pdf](http://www.marylandphysicianscare.com/pdf/MPC_Formulary.pdf)
- Clinical studies have shown the following:
  - ❖ In a comprehensive survey of published literature, Miller, et al.,<sup>1</sup> examined 243 articles on propoxyphene and found few hard data on its therapeutic value compared with other analgesics. Seven of the 16 reviewed studies compared propoxyphene with placebo (4 of which used the manufacturer's suggested dose of 65 mg) and showed that propoxyphene was not superior to placebo.
  - ❖ Hopkinson, et al.,<sup>2</sup> compared the analgesic effect of two combinations of drugs: 1) 1000 mg acetaminophen alone and 2) 650 mg acetaminophen plus 100 mg propoxyphene. Results showed that the acetaminophen-only treatment was significantly more effective than the propoxyphene/acetaminophen combination for the relief of pain (63% vs. 42% achieving effective pain relief), indicating that propoxyphene adds no analgesic properties to acetaminophen. **NOTE: FOR MARYLAND PHYSICIANS CARE THE QUANTITY LIMIT FOR ALL PRESCRIPTION AND OTC ACETAMINOPHEN PRODUCTS IS 4 GRAMS/DAY.**
- Propoxyphene can cause severe cardiovascular effects with overdose or even when used as directed.<sup>3</sup> When metabolized, a majority of propoxyphene is converted into norpropoxyphene, which is 2.5 times more potent than its parent compound in producing cardiac depression and has a half-life of approximately 36 hours, three times longer than that of propoxyphene.<sup>3</sup>
- Central nervous system-related adverse effects of propoxyphene use may increase the likelihood of falls and fall-related fractures in the elderly. As defined by the Beers criteria propoxyphene is a drug inappropriate for prescription to the elderly.<sup>4</sup>

Maryland Physicians Care appreciates the time and effort that you spend caring for our members. We believe that through a combined effort we can continue to provide affordable, quality care for Maryland Physicians Care members.

Sincerely,



Nina F. Miles Everett, M.D.  
Medical Director for Maryland Physicians Care