

**Reasons for Decision:**

**Order # AP1718-0397**

The appellant appealed five issues

1. <prescription drug> reimbursement
2. Transportation allowance
3. Room and board coverage
4. Neck traction unit
5. Tens unit

The Board was provided with a report on the <prescription drug> reimbursement only, due to an error with the request. The Board adjourned to review questioning. The program and the appellant were questioned on which of the remaining four issues have been requested and denied. It was confirmed that the request for a neck traction unit and the Tens unit have been recently requested and denied, therefore can be appealed. The appellant agreed that the Social Services Appeal Board would request a report from the program on those two issues and schedule a hearing for the appellant as soon as possible. As there was no decision before the Board on the transportation allowance and room and board coverage, the appellant will pursue that with the program. The appellant was advised that if denied, the appellant could appeal the decision at that time.

Medical <prescription drug>

The program representative stated that <text removed> is not an insured benefit under Manitoba Health Services Commission and therefore cannot be approved for coverage under the Provincial Drug Program. The appellant has been granted disability status from <months removed>. The appellant was advised that the appellant's medication costs would be covered as the appellant indicated the appellant could not afford the medications. A letter was sent to the appellant on <date removed> advising of the decision and that Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) is able to cover the medication costs. The appellant inquired with the program about the letter. The appellant was advised to submit receipts for the supervisor to review. At the hearing, the program representative said that the appellant did not indicate that the medication was <text removed> at that time. The supervisor informed the appellant on <date removed> that they do not cover <text removed> as it is not covered by the Manitoba Pharmacare Formulary. The appellant was advised of the right to appeal directly to Manitoba Health or to have the doctor apply for Exceptional Drug Status.

The appellant stated that EIA was well aware the medication the appellant was requesting reimbursement for was <text removed> as the appellant had filed an appeal in <year removed> on the same issue. When the appellant received the letter

dated <date removed> advising that EIA is able to cover the medication costs, the appellant assumed it was finally being covered.

The appellant said the appellant doesn't have any money left over after paying for the medication and needs to be reimbursed for the past prescriptions and covered for future prescriptions.

The Manitoba Assistance Regulation, Schedule A Section 9 Health Care allows for the payment of:

(d) Such essential drugs as may be prescribed by a duly qualified medical practitioner.

In administering the program, the Income Assistance Health Services Program in practice defines 'essential' as prescriptions that are listed on the provincial drug formulary, or drugs which have received exceptional drug status. This practice was adopted in 1995 to ensure consistency in coverage with other drug coverage for low income Manitobans. The Exceptional Drug Status Program provides a means for doctors to submit the rationale to experts in the area of prescription coverage to determine whether a drug is essential.

After carefully considering the written and verbal information, the Board has determined that the Department has administered the request for prescription coverage for <text removed> in accordance with the legislation and policies. The Board finds it unfortunate that the program did not review the appellant's file prior to the letters going out to the appellant, which understandably led to a misunderstanding. This led the appellant to believe it is now being covered. However, as <text removed> is not covered by Manitoba Health and the doctor has not requested exceptional drug status for this medication prescribed to the appellant, the Board must confirm the decision of the Director, and this appeal is dismissed.

## **DISCLAIMER**

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