

# Operations Memorandum

## Medical Assistance OPS090103

January 27, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Specialty Pharmacy Drug Program  
**TO:** Executive Directors  
**FROM:** Joanne Glover, Director, Bureau of Operations

### Purpose

To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) about implementation of the Specialty Pharmacy Drug Program and to provide information about the program. The program will cover a 42-county area.

### Background

Effective January 12, 2009, the Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP) implemented the Specialty Pharmacy Drug Program. The Specialty Pharmacy Drug Program addresses the needs of the increasing number of Medical Assistance (MA) Program recipients being prescribed specialty pharmacy drugs and the specialized services required to administer those drugs in a manner that ensures MA recipients' health and safety. Specialty pharmacy drugs are typically high-cost drugs used to treat chronic conditions; often require special handling; are either self-administered in the home or administered by a provider in the home, clinic, or physician's office; are associated with complex dosing regimens; and frequently require patient education, monitoring, and clinical supports. The number of specialty drugs is projected to increase in the upcoming years and the Department of Public Welfare selectively contracted through the competitive bidding process with a limited number of "preferred providers" as a strategy to manage the clinical and administrative complexities of specialty pharmacy drugs in a cost-effective manner.

### Discussion

OMAP issued MA Bulletin Number: 99-09-01, Title: Specialty Pharmacy Drug Program, Effective Date: January 12, 2009, which describes the program, and provides:

- A map of the 42-county area that the Program covers;
- A copy of the client notice sent to MA recipients in the 42-county area who may be affected by the program (notices were mailed the week of November 3, 2008);

- A list of specialty pharmacy drugs covered by the program;
- Contact information for the preferred providers; and
- Procedures to access specialty pharmacy medications.

The MA Bulletin and Attachments can be found at:

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/PubsFormsReports/NewslettersBulletins/003673169.aspx?BulletinDetailId=4403>

Although the client notice directs the MA recipients to the MA Call Center and the MA providers to the Pharmacy Call center, we are providing a list of [Questions and Answers \(Qs & As\)](#) in the event that an MA recipient or a provider contacts the CAO for information. If either the MA recipient's or the MA provider's question is not addressed on the attached set of Qs & As, please direct the caller to the appropriate OMAP call center:

- For MA recipients: 1-800-657-7925 (TDD/TTY 1-866-872-8970)
- For MA providers: 1-800-558-4477 Option 1

### **Next Steps**

1. Share this information with appropriate staff.
2. Contact your Area Manager with any questions.