

# Exception Drug Status Q&A

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## GENERAL INFORMATION:

### **What is the Saskatchewan Formulary?**

- The [Saskatchewan Formulary](#) is a list of drugs that are benefits under the Saskatchewan Drug Plan based on the review by and advice from the Drug Advisory Committee of Saskatchewan (DACs).

### **What is the Drug Advisory Committee of Saskatchewan (DACs)?**

- The Drug Advisory Committee of Saskatchewan (DACs) provides independent, specialized recommendations regarding drugs for listing on the Saskatchewan Formulary.

### **Does the Saskatchewan Formulary list all drugs?**

- No. The Saskatchewan Formulary does not list all drugs.
- DACs makes recommendations to:
  - List a drug on the Saskatchewan Formulary, or
  - List a drug with Exception Drug Status criteria, or
  - Not list a drug.

### **What drugs are Saskatchewan Drug Plan benefits?**

- Drug Plan benefits are drugs listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary or approved under Exception Drug Status.

### **What does it mean for an individual when a drug is a Saskatchewan Drug Plan benefit?**

- When a drug is a Saskatchewan Drug Plan benefit, it means that the drug is eligible for Drug Plan coverage.
- Individuals pay for the drug according to their own individual deductible and/or copayment, depending on eligibility to certain programs.

### **When something is a Saskatchewan Drug Plan benefit, does it mean that it is free or no charge?**

- When a drug is a Saskatchewan Drug Plan benefit, it does not mean it will be free or no charge.
- Individuals pay for the drug according to their own individual deductible and/or copayment, depending on eligibility to certain programs. Examples:
  - Some individuals may pay \$2 or no charge under income assistance programs through Ministry of Social Services.
  - Some individuals may pay \$25 under the Seniors Drug Plan.
  - Some individuals may pay a copayment percentage under the Special Support Program. Percentages can range from 1% to 100% depending on income and drug costs.

### **What does Exception Drug Status (EDS) mean?**

- Individuals must meet certain medical criteria for a drug with [Exception Drug Status](#) listing to be a Saskatchewan Drug Plan benefit.
- Individuals pay for the drug according to their own individual deductible and/or copayment, depending on eligibility to certain programs.
- If an EDS drug is not approved, the individual is responsible for the full cost of the drug.

### **What happens if an individual meets the medical criteria for Exception Drug Status (EDS)?**

- If an individual meets EDS criteria, the drug is approved as a Saskatchewan Drug Plan benefit.
- Individuals pay for the drug according to their own individual deductible and/or copayment, depending on eligibility to certain programs.

### **What happens if an individual does not meet the medical criteria for Exception Drug Status (EDS)?**

- If an individual does not meet EDS criteria, the drug is not a Saskatchewan Drug Plan benefit.
- Individuals are responsible for the full cost of the drug.

### **What affects the cost of a drug?**

- There are two parts that determine the cost of a drug to an individual:
  - *Approval of the drug:* The drug must be an approved Drug Plan benefit, either listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary or approved under Exception Drug Status;

**and**

  - *Assistance with the cost:* The drug cost assistance must be available for the individual through various programs, such as [Special Support](#), [Seniors Drug Plan](#), [Children's Drug Plan](#), [Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living](#), [Palliative Care Drug Coverage](#), provincial income assistance programs through the Ministry of Social Services ([Supplementary Health Benefits](#), [Family Health Benefits](#), [Seniors Income Plan](#)), or federal income assistance programs ([Guaranteed Income Supplement](#)).

## EDS APPLICATION PROCESS:

### What is the process to apply for Exception Drug Status (EDS)?

- Physicians, nurse practitioners, or pharmacists must submit a request for Exception Drug Status (EDS).
- Requests may be submitted to the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch by:
  - Phone: toll-free at 1-800-667-2549 or in Regina at 306-787-8744
  - Fax: Complete a form and fax to 306-798-1089
  - Email: Complete a form and email [dpeb@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:dpeb@health.gov.sk.ca)

### Can an individual submit a request for Exception Drug Status (EDS)?

- No. Individuals cannot submit the request for EDS.
- Physicians, nurse practitioners, or pharmacists must submit a request for Exception Drug Status (EDS).

### How would a physician, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist access the EDS request forms?

- EDS Request Forms are available for physicians, nurse practitioners, and pharmacists on the [Saskatchewan Formulary](#) website.

### How should the physician, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist complete the [form](#)?

- The physician, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist must ensure complete information is included in the EDS submission to avoid delays:
  - [Health Services Number](#) (HSN)
  - Patient name
  - Prescriber name and contact information
  - Drug name
  - Patient diagnosis relevant to drug
  - Drug allergies, if applicable
  - Previous drug therapy relevant to the diagnosis and information clearly outlining how the patient meets the EDS criteria
  - Requestor name and contact information

### Why is a submitted [form](#) or telephone request for Exception Drug Status (EDS) required?

- A request from the physician, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist is required to determine if the individual meets EDS criteria.

### **How will an individual know if there is an approval or denial for Exception Drug Status (EDS)?**

- Individuals will receive a letter in the mail after the Drug Plan reviews the EDS request and completes the determination.
- The letter will indicate name of the drug, the effective date of coverage, and the expiry date.
- The letter is for the individual's records and they are not required to show it to the pharmacist to receive benefits.
- Private insurers may require a copy of the letter. Individuals are encouraged to retain a copy of the letter for their files and to forward a copy of the letter to their private insurer.

### **When an EDS request is approved, what is the effective date of coverage?**

- The effective date is the date the Drug Plan received a complete request with all the required documentation.

### **Will the EDS approval last a lifetime?**

- EDS approval durations will vary depending on the drug and diagnosis.
- Some examples of approval durations are: three months for short-term therapies; one to three years; or indefinite approval for long-term therapies.

### **Can individuals ask why the Exception Drug Status (EDS) request was not approved?**

- Individuals, physicians, nurse practitioners, and pharmacists may contact the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch if they have additional questions regarding their EDS request.
- EDS requests may not be approved if individuals do not meet [published criteria](#), if there is a lack of information, if there is missing information, or if the drug is not a benefit.

### **Why does my private insurer/third party require a letter for Exception Drug Status?**

- Please contact your private insurer or group benefits administrator to determine what processes are required through their policy.

### **I lost my EDS letter. How does someone request another copy of the letter?**

- Individuals may contact the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch with their Health Services Number (HSN) to request a copy of their EDS letter:

Phone: toll-free at 1-800-667-2549 or  
in Regina at 306-787-8744  
press #2 to leave a voicemail or remain on the line to speak to an assessor

Email: [dpeb@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:dpeb@health.gov.sk.ca)

## RENEWAL PROCESS:

### **Will individuals, physicians, nurse practitioners, or pharmacists receive a renewal notice?**

- The Drug Plan does not send renewal notices to individuals.
- Letters mailed to individuals are in response to initial and renewal EDS requests from health providers.
- Individuals are responsible for monitoring their expiry dates and encouraged to work with their health providers to ensure coverage does not lapse.

### **How does my physician, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist renew Exception Drug Status (EDS)?**

- Physician, nurse practitioner, or pharmacists may renew Exception Drug Status by submitting a renewal request to the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch by:
  - Phone: toll-free at 1-800-667-2549 or  
in Regina at 306-787-8744
  - Fax: Complete a form and fax to 306-798-1089
  - Email: Complete a form and email [dpeb@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:dpeb@health.gov.sk.ca)

## COST INFORMATION:

### **What do individuals pay for drugs listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary or approved under Exception Drug Status (EDS)?**

- Individuals pay for the drug according to their own individual deductible and/or copayment.

### **When it is approved under Exception Drug Status (EDS) does it mean that it is free or no charge?**

- When a drug is a Saskatchewan Drug Plan benefit, it does not mean it will be free or no charge.
- Individuals pay for the drug according to their own individual deductible and/or copayment, depending on eligibility to certain programs. Examples:
  - Some individuals may pay \$2 or no charge under income assistance programs through Ministry of Social Services.
  - Some individuals may pay \$25 under the Seniors Drug Plan.
  - Some individuals may pay a copayment percentage under the Special Support Program. Percentages can range from 1% to 100% depending on income and drug costs.

### **I have approval for Exception Drug Status (EDS) but I still pay full price for the drug. Why?**

- There are two parts that determine the cost of a drug to an individual:
  - *Approval of the drug:* The drug must be an approved Drug Plan benefit, either listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary or approved under Exception Drug Status;
- and**
- *Assistance with the cost:* The drug cost assistance must be available for the individual through various programs, such as [Special Support](#), [Seniors Drug Plan](#), [Children's Drug Plan](#), [Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living](#), [Palliative Care Drug Coverage](#), provincial income assistance programs through the Ministry of Social Services ([Supplementary Health Benefits](#), [Family Health Benefits](#), [Seniors Income Plan](#)), or federal income assistance programs ([Guaranteed Income Supplement](#)).
- The cost of a prescription to an individual will depend on the approval of the drug as a benefit AND an individual's deductible and/or copayment under any one of the above programs.

### **I have applied for Special Support or Seniors' Drug Plan but still pay full price for the drug. Why?**

- There are two parts that determine the cost of a drug to an individual:
  - *Approval of the drug:* The drug must be an approved Drug Plan benefit, either listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary or approved under Exception Drug Status;
- and**
- *Assistance with the cost:* The drug cost assistance must be available for the individual through various programs, such as [Special Support](#), [Seniors Drug Plan](#), [Children's Drug Plan](#), [Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living](#), [Palliative Care Drug Coverage](#), provincial income assistance programs through the Ministry of Social Services ([Supplementary Health Benefits](#), [Family Health Benefits](#), [Seniors Income Plan](#)), or federal income assistance programs ([Guaranteed Income Supplement](#)).
- The cost of a prescription to an individual will depend on the approval of the drug as a benefit AND an individual's deductible and/or copayment under any one of the above programs.

### **What is the process if an individual paid full price for a drug before receiving approval for Exception Drug Status (EDS)?**

- An individual may submit their prescription receipt for review and consideration of a refund to the Drug Plan at 3475 Albert Street, Regina, SK, S4S 6X6.
- Original receipts are not returned to individuals. Individuals are encouraged to keep a copy for their records.
- Note: not all prescription receipts are eligible for a refund depending on an individual's coverage.

### **What are other types of drug cost assistance?**

- Private insurance may cover the balance of the Drug Plan copayment paid by the individual.
- Individuals should contact their private insurer or group benefits administrator to determine what benefits are available through their policy.

## OTHER PROGRAMS AND QUESTIONS:

### What would an individual pay if they had coverage through both the Special Support Program and Seniors' Drug Plan?

- For drugs covered by the Saskatchewan Formulary and approved under [Exception Drug Status](#), individuals pay the lesser of the Special Support coverage or Seniors' Drug Plan coverage.
- For example,
  - If a prescription costs \$25 under the Seniors' Drug Plan or \$49 under the Special Support Program, the individual pays \$25 for that prescription.
  - If a prescription costs \$25 under the Seniors' Drug Plan or \$9 under the Special Support Program, the individual pays \$9 for that prescription.
- More information is available online for the Special Support Program and Seniors' Drug Plan:
  - <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/prescription-drug-plans-and-health-coverage/extended-benefits-and-drug-plan/drug-cost-assistance> .
  - <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/accessing-health-care-services/seniors-drug-plan>

### What happens if an individual has drug coverage under [Supplementary Health Benefits](#), [Palliative Care Drug Coverage](#) or [Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living \(SAIL\)](#)?

- Coverage under Supplementary Health Benefits, provides benefit drugs for \$2 or no charge.
- Coverage under Palliative Care, and SAIL programs (paraplegia, cystic fibrosis, and end stage renal disease programs) provides benefit drugs at no cost.

### Are over-the-counter and herbal products eligible benefits under Exception Drug Status (EDS)?

- No. Only prescription drugs listed in the Saskatchewan Formulary or those approved under [Exception Drug Status](#) are eligible for coverage.

### If an individual's private insurance will not cover the cost of my Exception Drug Status (EDS) drug, what should they do?

- Contact the private insurer or the group benefits administrator for more information regarding the policy on drug coverage.
- Some private insurers require a letter of approval or denial from the Saskatchewan Drug Plan before they will consider providing coverage.
- Individuals may contact the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch with their Health Services Number (HSN) to request a copy of their EDS letter:

Phone: toll-free at 1-800-667-2549 or  
in Regina at 306-787-8744  
press #2 to leave a voicemail or remain on the line to speak to an assessor

Email: [dpeb@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:dpeb@health.gov.sk.ca)

**My private insurer does not cover my medications, even though the Saskatchewan Drug Plan lists the medication on the Formulary.**

- There are many policies through private insurers with various types of coverage.
- Please contact your private insurer or group benefits administrator for more information.

**Will my private insurer/third party plan cover the Special Support copayment?**

- Please contact your private insurer or group benefits administrator to determine what benefits are available through their policy.