



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Office of Medicaid  
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Boston, MA 02111



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Medicaid Director

September 1, 2005

Dear Prescriber:

As of October 3, 2005, all products containing carisoprodol will require prior authorization when prescribed for MassHealth members. This change reflects MassHealth's and the Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Board's review of carisoprodol.

Carisoprodol has shown limited efficacy in the relief of acute pain associated with musculoskeletal conditions, as an adjunct to rest, physical therapy, and other measures. Carisoprodol does not act directly on the skeletal muscles, but its effects are thought to be related to its sedative properties. Carisoprodol is metabolized to meprobamate, a Schedule IV anxiolytic with a known potential for abuse.

According to data collected by the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), a surveillance system operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, carisoprodol had a similar abuse pattern to meprobamate. Carisoprodol abuse was often identified in combination with other drugs of abuse such as benzodiazepines, opioid analgesics, alcohol and barbiturates\*. Carisoprodol abuse can lead to seizures, coma, and death.

The **MassHealth Drug List** can be found at [www.mass.gov/druglist](http://www.mass.gov/druglist). We would encourage you to review the site because it provides valuable information about the pharmacy benefit for MassHealth members. Specifically, the List lets you know which drugs require prior authorization in the MassHealth program and provides other useful clinical information. We also encourage you to use the MassHealth Web site to subscribe to our service that will automatically send you e-mail alerts when the MassHealth Drug List is updated.

Thank you for your continued help in providing clinically appropriate care for MassHealth members.

Sincerely,

Ron Steingard, MD  
Medical Director, MassHealth

Paul Jeffrey, PharmD  
Director of Pharmacy, MassHealth

\* Johnson-Rochée M, ed. In the Spotlight: Carisoprodol. *On-Line With Industry*. Winter 2002/2003;02(1):3-6.  
Available at: <http://www.deaddiversion.usdoj.gov/>