



# PHARMACY FACTS

Current information for pharmacists about  
the MassHealth Pharmacy Program

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## Overview of Implementation of Adult Prescription Stimulant Restrictions

Prescription stimulants are commonly used for the treatment of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), narcolepsy, and excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) in children and adults. In 2020, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) reported 10.3 million people in the US abusing or misusing CNS stimulants.<sup>1</sup>

Drug overdose deaths that involved a psychostimulant with abuse potential, including methamphetamine, rose from 547 in 1999 to 23,837 in 2020.<sup>1</sup> In Massachusetts specifically, an analysis of stimulant prescription rates indicated rapid growth from 2010 to 2019.<sup>2</sup>

For the treatment of ADHD, the use of stimulant medications in adults is typically appropriate. The diagnosis of ADHD in adults should consider *diagnostic criteria* as outlined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition*.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, the use of *long-acting (LA) agents* is recommended by treatment guidelines, as clinical literature indicates short-acting formulations are more commonly abused than LA formulations, with the highest proportion of misuse among young adults.<sup>4-6</sup>

## Description of Restrictions for Adult Use of Prescription Stimulants

Given this information, MassHealth will implement restrictions on stimulant medications for adults beginning on *December 12, 2022*. Prior authorization (PA) will be required for adult members 21 years of age and older who are *newly starting* (defined as anyone who has not

filled a stimulant within the last 90 days) any stimulant medication.

Please note that adult members *21 years of age and older* initiating treatment with a CNS stimulant will require *an appropriate diagnosis* for the use of the stimulant medication. If applicable, such requests must also meet PA criteria unique to the requested drug, as well as any applicable quantity limits.

The MassHealth Drug List, including *Therapeutic Class Table 31* outlining the coverage status and PA criteria for CNS stimulants, and the *Cerebral Stimulant and ADHD Drugs PA form*, will be updated to reflect these changes. The MassHealth Drug List can be found at [www.mass.gov/masshealth/pharmacy](http://www.mass.gov/masshealth/pharmacy).

## References

1. Overdose Death Rates. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Available from: <https://nida.nih.gov/drug-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates>.
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3. American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition. Arlington, VA., American Psychiatric Association, 2013.
4. Post RE, Kurlansik SL. Diagnosis and Management of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Adults. *Am Fam Physician*. 2012 May 1;85(9):890-896.
5. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: Diagnosis and management [guideline on the Internet]. London (UK). September 2019. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87/>.
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