Drugs - Improve Appropriate Prescribing

Prescribing the appropriate or correct medication or drug for a patient is a key responsibility for Ontario physicians.

The ministry will work with physicians to ensure that medications are prescribed in a way that reduces mistakes, helps patients avoid side effects, and helps to improve their health or correct their symptoms.

What does OHIP fund?

OHIP covers medically necessary physician services, which includes diagnoses and treatment. This includes prescribing drugs when that is appropriate for the patient’s treatment.

Separate from the OHIP budget, prescribing decisions made by doctors also have an impact on the Ontario Drug Benefit budget. The Ontario Drug Benefit covers the cost of medications for over 3,800 drugs for seniors, patients in long-term care or home care, those receiving coverage through the Trillium Drug Program, and those receiving social assistance through Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program.

What changes are included in the 2012 Physician Services Agreement and why?

- The agreement will help physicians to use best evidence to prescribe drugs in order to reduce under-use, misuse and over-use of medications and to make sure that the right drugs are prescribed.
- This change will also encourage physicians to prescribe less expensive generic brand drugs instead of the higher priced brand-name medication, where this is appropriate for the patient.

Will OHIP continue to fund these services?

Yes, OHIP will continue to fund these medically necessary services. Likewise, the Ontario Drug Benefit will continue to cover the cost of medications for eligible patients, with the expectation that doctors will be better informed on prescribing the appropriate drugs for their patients.
What are the savings from this change in the first and second years of the Agreement?

- $2.5 million from the Ontario Drug Benefit budget.

When is this change effective?

This change is effective on April 1, 2013

For More Information

OHIP InfoBulletin #4585

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/ohip/bulletins/4000/bul4585.pdf