

June 30, 2011

IMPORTANT NOTICE
Cough and Cold Medications for Children Age 2 and Under

Dear Doctor:

I am writing to alert you to a **new HPSM prior authorization requirement** affecting requests for cough and cold medications for **children under two years of age**. As you may be aware, the FDA recently recommended that no cough or cold medications be used in children under age two, due to the safety risk that a number of studies have documented in babies and children of this age.

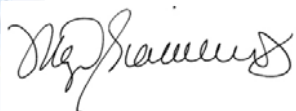
As a result, the state Medi-Cal program, and HPSM, are now requiring that prior authorization be in place before any cough and cold medications that are prescribed can be dispensed and paid for by Medi-Cal or HPSM. For safety reasons, non-pharmaceutical interventions such as use of a vaporizer or humidifier, or saline drops and bulb syringe suctioning are now considered the first line therapies for children in this age group with cough and cold symptoms. Authorization of pharmaceutical intervention will only be considered after these methods have been tried and shown to be ineffective, or there is a medical necessity basis documented for moving straight to pharmaceutical remedies.

This new authorization requirement is effective July 1, 2011, and applies to all HPSM lines of business including Medi-Cal, Healthy Families and Healthy Kids. No special authorization form is needed—the usual pharmacy Medication Request Form (MRF), found on HPSM's web site, is to be used.

If you have any questions about this change, please feel free to e-mail Barrie Cheung Pharm.D, Pharmacy Services Manager at barrie.cheung@hpsm.org or me at mary.giammona@hpsm.org or call us at 650-616-0050.

Thank you for your continued commitment to caring for our HPSM children.

Sincerely,



Mary D. Giammona, MD, MPH
Medical Director