

BRIEFING FOR MPS MEMBERS
Formularies, Drug Lists, and PA Processes
MPS FAQs: Including MassHealth Drug List

Update March 2005

How has MPS been involved with development of the MassHealth Drug List?

Former DMA Medical Director Annette Hanson, M.D. and former DMH Deputy Commissioner Ken Duckworth, M.D. requested expert input from the MPS for their Psychopharmacology Working Group in 2002 while developing the MassHealth Drug List and later, the PA guidelines. They wanted to be sure that any changes in provider requirements were consistent with clinically appropriate and evidence-based practices. Four MPS representatives attended meetings of the MassHealth Drug List work group (Drs. Osser, Ellison, Kardos, and Hobart). Other members of this group included a child psychopharmacologist (Dr. Steingard); an internist; a psychiatrist representing the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (Dr. McCrory); the medical director of MBHP (Dr. Thatcher); DMA pharmacists; and the DMH pharmacy (MedManagement). The DMA and DMH endorsed a set of principles developed by the MPS and hired two part-time psychiatrists to assist in review of denied prior approvals. The Working Group met frequently and MPS input was taken into account in many decisions. Following the departures in 2004 of Dr. Hanson and Dr. Duckworth from their respective positions, the group's function shifted and meetings are currently occurring every 6 months.

Who are the current MPS representatives?

James Ellison, M.D., MPH	Immediate Past President & Chair, MPS Nominating Committee 2004
Marie Hobart, M.D.	MPS Treasurer
Marianne Kardos, M.D.	MPS Nominating Committee 2003
David Osser, M.D.	Former MPS President, & Faculty Director, MPS Psychopharmacology Conference

How do the MPS representatives to the MassHealth DURP (Drug Utilization Review Program) work group interact with the MPS elected officials and membership at large?

The work group serves to provide information to the MPS representatives, as well as for the MPS to provide clinical feedback to the DURP and Office of Medicaid. The MPS representatives then convey this information to the MPS Executive Committee, Council, and members through the Bulletin.

In general, how are things going now with the MHDL?

MPS members have consistently expressed concern regarding any limitations of prescribing autonomy and/or patient access to the full range of psychiatric medications. Feedback from MPS members indicates that many psychiatrists have experienced that the MHDL PA requirements create extra administrative work and account for increased difficulty in patient access to medications. The MPS' position regarding formularies is summarized in our statement on this topic (insert link here to the website page/document). The MPS considers it unacceptable for any patients to be prevented from getting the medications that are appropriately indicated for them in a timely manner. At the same time, the MPS is sympathetic to DURP, Medicaid, and DMH concerns regarding inappropriate prescribing, polypharmacy, and inadvisable forms of duplicative therapy and the MPS recognizes that all prescribing clinicians (not only psychiatrists) are encountering prescribing limitations as a result of pharmaceutical costs and budgetary constraints. The MPS has commented on the composition of the drug list, and presented evidence-based research to support

decision-making, as well as given feedback about the practical and administrative aspects of the implementation of this system.

What action is MPS taking to address the current situation?

The MPS is no longer an active contributor to the DURP's process and the development of new pharmacy initiatives, but remains vigilant and is monitoring closely any changes. MPS will continue to inform members and send communications to the Office of Medicaid and the DURP regarding these changes as they arise. Through previous interventions, the MPS has helped to increase access to atypical antipsychotics and topiramate. At present, MPS is seeking assurance that clinical psychiatric input will be sought and considered with respect to new pharmacy initiatives. Recent initiatives that may be of concern to members have affected access to modafinil (Provigil) and increased the work necessary for accessing the "dual action" antidepressants, venlafaxine (Effexor) and duloxetine (Cymbalta).

Where can I find more information about the MHDL, PA Process, required documentation & forms?

Clicking on any of the following links will provide further information:

[Introduction to MassHealth Drug List](#) provides an overview of the MassHealth Drug List. [Prior Authorization Forms for Pharmacy Services](#) includes links to all Prior Authorization forms for MassHealth Pharmacy Services. [Subscribe to email Alerts for the MassHealth Drug List](#) to receive email updates to the Drug List/PA process.

Whom should I call if I have a problem getting authorization for my patient's specific needs?

Insert contact information for MHDL enquiries/problem resolution. Members should also report any problems/concerns to the Massachusetts Psychiatric Society (MPS) via our email mps@psychiatry-mps.org, or call 781-237-8100.

Some Managed Care companies are also embarking on formulary restrictions – how can I get more information about this and what the MPS is doing in relation to Managed Care?

The MPS Managed Care Committee is a very active committee meeting in person once a month, and operating an email group. The Managed Care Committee gives regular feedback to members and officers of the MPS including regular contributions to the MPS newsletter and agenda items for Council and Executive Committee. You can contact the committee via Gene Fierman, MD efierman@massmed.org or Bev Sheehan at MPS office bsheehan@psychiatry-mps.org 781 237 8100 Ext 11 for more information.

What if I have encountered problems with a PA Process that I would like to share with MPS officers/other members?

The MPS welcomes feedback and specific questions. You can write, phone, fax or email the MPS Representatives, or the MPS Council via the MPS office: Email mps@psychiatry-mps.org, Fax (781) 237 7625, Tel (781) 237 8100 Ext 12 or write to MPS: 40 Washington Street, Suite 201, Wellesley, MA 02481. Further updates will follow in the MPS Bulletin as we have more news.

Where can I find more information about evidence-based practices/prescribing?

The MPS has recently created a section of our website using materials from the 15th Annual Psychopharmacology conference on Evidence-Based Mental Health. [Click Here](#) to access these resources