



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services

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Acting Commissioner

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Assistant Commissioner

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
AND HEALTH SERVICES

J.H.,

PETITIONER,

v.

DIVISION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE :

AND HEALTH SERVICES AND :

UNITEDHEALTHCARE, :

RESPONDENTS. :

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

FINAL AGENCY DECISION

OAL DKT. NO. HMA 15833-25

As Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS), I have reviewed the record in this case, including the OAL case file, the documents in evidence, and the Initial Decision. Neither party filed exceptions to the Initial Decision. Procedurally, the time period for the Agency Head to render a Final Agency Decision is March 13, 2026, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:14B-10, which

requires an Agency Head to adopt, reject, or modify the Initial Decision within 45 days of the agency's receipt.

This matter concerns UnitedHealthcare's denial of Petitioner's request to increase the dosage of scopolamine to 1 mg every three days, on the basis that Petitioner did not meet the applicable guidelines under N.J.A.C. 10:51-1. The issue here is whether UnitedHealthcare properly denied Petitioner's request in accordance with Medicaid regulations.

Petitioner, a Medicaid beneficiary enrolled with UnitedHealthcare, sought coverage for scopolamine transdermal patches at a dosage exceeding the plan's established dosage and quantity-limit guidelines. (R-2, R-5.) While the plan permits the use of one patch every three days, Petitioners requested more than ten patches within a thirty-day period, based on the treating physician's recommendation of one patch every other day. Ibid. Because the requested quantity exceeded the plan's allowable limit, UnitedHealthcare denied coverage. Ibid.

UnitedHealthcare issued its denial on July 30, 2025, based on Petitioner's failure to meet quantity-limit criteria. Ibid. The denial explained that coverage beyond ten patches per thirty days requires documentation demonstrating compliance with recognized dosing guidelines or a medical-necessity exception. Ibid.

The treating physician, Andrea Ianuzzelli, D.O., documented that although the scopolamine patch is initially effective, its therapeutic benefits diminish by the third day. Ibid. Due to the reduced duration of effectiveness, the physician recommended adjusting the dosing frequency to every other day to maintain symptom control. Ibid. The physician also proposed an alternative treatment plan that included atropine drops in combination with the scopolamine patch. Ibid.

Petitioner appealed UnitedHealthcare's determination, and a hearing was held on January 7, 2026. ID at 2.

The Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) upheld the denial, finding that Medicaid coverage for prescription drugs is limited to medications that are medically necessary, reasonable, and provided in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, and program standards. ID at 4. The applicable program guidelines established that the standard course of use for the scopolamine transdermal patch is one every three days. Ibid. Petitioner's request for one patch every other day fell outside the established dosing guidelines. Ibid. As a result, Petitioner failed to satisfy the three-step dosage criteria required under the medication's prior-authorization guidelines, meeting only the first criterion and failing the second, thereby never advancing to the third. Ibid. Additionally, no testimony was presented to establish medical necessity for the requested dosage. Ibid. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that UnitedHealthcare's denial of coverage was proper. I concur with the ALJ's findings and conclusions.

N.J.A.C. 10:51-1 outlines policies and procedures governing pharmacies that serve New Jersey Medicaid beneficiaries, including requirements related to prescription drug dispensing, billing, and limitations within these programs. Under the Pharmaceutical Services Manual, requests for increases in prescribed medications or modifications to an original prescription must comply with specific regulatory requirements and may be denied due to quantity limits, refill restrictions, or a lack of demonstrated medical necessity.

Here, Petitioner requested an increase in the drug's dosage. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10-51-1.11, UnitedHealthcare applies established dosage and prior-authorization guidelines for medications. Although Petitioner requested an increased dosage of scopolamine patch based on the treating physician's recommendation, neither testimony

nor medical records demonstrated that the higher-than-allowed dosage was medically necessary or that deviation from standard dosing guidelines was warranted. In the absence of such justification, the request did not meet the criteria for approval.

Accordingly, UnitedHealthcare properly denied Petitioner's request under N.J.A.C. 10:51-1, as Petitioner failed to demonstrate that the requested dosage increase was medically necessary.

THEREFORE, it is on this 9th day of MARCH 2026,

ORDERED:

That the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED.



Gregory Woods, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services