

Empire Prescription Drug List Changes – Effective October 1, 2020

At the end of July, Empire will send letters to around 275 members notifying them that drugs they are currently prescribed will change from “formulary” to “non-formulary”. The effective date for these changes will be October 1, 2020. The letter will list available, alternative formulary drugs or over-the-counter (OTC) drugs that have been shown to have similar effectiveness. Members will also be reminded that their physicians can request reviews by Empire for continued use of non-formulary (NF) drugs for certain types of cases.

Clinical trial data and actual medical outcomes are analyzed and those drugs that are either less effective than their alternatives or have less costly alternatives with similar outcomes are moved to NF status. The overall goal of drug list management methods is to make the best use of the Consortium's limited resources and to ensure the plan's long-term ability to provide high quality health care for all members.

Empire's prescription drug list is reviewed quarterly and adjusted twice a year - normally in April and October. This year's April changes were delayed until October due to COVID-19 issues. Approximately 85 drugs will move to NF status (from a list of over 6,000 drugs), which is about twice as many as is normally removed from the formulary each time. We would expect about half as many at the next adjustment.