

Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2007 4:04 PM
To: BAP Requests
Subject: PHARMACY BENEFITS COMMENTS
Importance: High

The following comments pertain to the activities of the Panel in determining what medication, duly prescribed by a physician, may be denied and why.

This is a copy of yet another appeal to TRICARE, sent with an attached to a letter from my physician:

TO: Express Scripts Clinical Appeal
RE: Lamisil

For more than 16 years I have been fighting a fungal infection of my big toe nail on my right foot and the middle finger nail of my right hand. I have tried every over-the-counter medication and dozens of prescription medications to treat this condition, all to no avail.

Nearly a year ago I visited a Board Certified Dermatologist, and was prescribed Lamisil to treat my infection. Express Scripts denied this Rx and sent a form to be completed by the Doctor. Still it was denied.

The doctor said that he would help me treat the infection by giving me some sample Lamisil and see if he could clear up the infection. For four months he supplied me with the sample Lamisil, the infection in my fingernail was nearly gone and there was good progress in my toenail. Doctor ran out of samples. He again gave me a prescription for Lamisil, Express Scripts again denied to fill this Rx. I went to a local pharmacy, but the price I was quoted was far more than I could afford.

I am the widow of a graduate of USMA at West Point, Colonel USAF, retired after 26 years of military service, and now buried at Arlington National Cemetery. I will be 73 years old next month. My sole source of income is my Social Security check of \$1056 per month. I am completely unable to pay the retail price for this medication that I desperately need.

This medication has already been proven to work on my finger and toe infection, and the inability to acquire it has caused the infection to return and it is even more painful. The infection has caused the nails to be come deformed to such an extent that the each nail is curled high above the nail bed, cutting into the soft tissue on the sides of the nail bed causing recurrent ingrown nail infection and pain.

If your reason is that this medication is too expensive to be granted to me, please consider the price that my husband paid to earn this benefit.

----- end forward -----

As stated in the above letter, the treatment and denial of authorization process has been on-going for many years, with visits to doctors, lab tests, and trial of various OTC and Rx medications. My current doctor has stated that he can not obtain a current accurate lab culture due to the modifying effects on the infection from the years of long term treatment previously undertaken.

TRICARE may have meant well in their repeated denials over the span of many years, but that ruling has resulted in harsh consequences to me. I am sure that to DOD and TRICARE these consequences may be unanticipated and unintended, but for those suffering from this long term disease we feel its financial, medical and physical harm daily. This points to significant shortfalls in providing care to military members and their families, especially in the case of your commitment to providing the best medical care in the world, not only to active duty military and their families, but to retired military members and widows who deserve no less.

I am appreciative for all the benefits of the TRICARE Drug Benefit Program, and for the mail order program which has generally served me well. However, for me, as the widow of a retired USAF officer, the promise of health care for life, with payment for Medicare and co-pay for medications that promise is not being kept. I am in desperate need of treatment with a prescribed medication that will cure my infection. I know this medication is expensive, which is exactly why I can not bear the cost and why I am requesting that the TRICARE Drug Benefit Program help me.

The point should have been reached long ago when someone at TRICARE would have considered that giving me the proper medication and curing this infection would produce the best medical result for me and financial result for TRICARE. My dear old grandmother would declare this costly delay to be penny wise and pound foolish.