

Date

Dear Physician

I am writing to make you aware that the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) will be implementing a "Procrit® First" policy for treating patients with anemia effective May 1, 2009. Epoetin alfa (Procrit) will be required as the first-line therapy for these patients rather than darbepoetin alfa (Aranesp®).

A "Procrit First" policy already exists in our pharmacy plan, so this change will add to the standardization of PEIA's policies for the erythroid stimulant class under the medical and prescription drug plans.

Epoetin alfa and darbepoetin alfa are considered to be therapeutically equivalent drugs used to treat anemia for a variety of conditions, including renal failure and chemotherapy.

To make this transition as seamless as possible, PEIA will provide a grace period for members who receive darbepoetin alfa during a cycle of chemotherapy that starts before May 1, 2009. Epoetin alfa will be required for treatment cycles that begin after that date, unless medical necessity is demonstrated.

PEIA will require prior authorization for the use of this class of medications. To obtain prior authorization, call or fax the appropriate information to:

<b>Benefits Under:</b>	<b>Administered By:</b>	<b>Phone Number:</b>	<b>Fax Number:</b>
Prescription Drug Plan	Express Scripts & RDT	1-800-847-3859	1-800-531-7787
Medical Plan	HealthSmart	1-888-440-7342	304-353-8732

If the member has an inadequate response to epoetin alfa therapy, the above information may also be used to request approval of Aranesp®.

Questions regarding prior authorization should be directed to the vendors listed above.

Sincerely,

Gloria Long  
Deputy Director of Insurance Programs & Services

Enclosure – Prior Authorization Form for the Prescription Drug Plan