

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council

From: Elaine Carroll
Patient Services Administrator
CCSD

Date: August 18, 2005

RE: Questions from Council regarding the CHC formulary and emergency contraception

The following information is provided for clarification of policies and procedures regarding emergency contraception dispensed for patients of the Community Health Centers (CHC). The questions are listed with a response directly following the question.

1. It is my understanding that neither birth control nor emergency contraception is listed on the formulary. Is that accurate?

Response: That is correct. The CHC's follow treatment protocols that are developed by the medical staff and approved by the Medical Director. Oral contraceptives and emergency contraception are dispensed at the CHC's according to those treatment protocols.

2. Please provide general background on the city's formulary with Walgreens. How is it determined what drugs get on the formulary? What's the benefit of a drug being on the formulary? What happens if a patient needs a prescription filled that is not on the formulary?

Response: The CHCs utilizes the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee (comprised of the CHC Medical Director, CHC providers (physicians and nurse practitioner) and pharmacists to determine the composition of the formulary. Selections are made based upon the expected therapeutic value for the patients, whether the drug is available through patient assistance programs, availability of the drug from the manufacturer, etc. The P&T Committee adds and deletes drugs to the CHC formulary in order to make appropriate drugs available for treatment of patients. If a physician requests a drug for a patient that is not on the formulary, the medical director and pharmacy director review the request for medical necessity and determine if there are other drugs on the formulary with the same therapeutic effect. If not, the drug is -authorized to be dispensed on an exception basis. Note: The CHCs have after hours staff on duty to accept calls from patients seeking medical assistance, including emergency contraception.

3. Can patients pick up their prescriptions at Walgreens outside of Austin or are prescriptions only filled at Walgreens in the city/county.

Response: Due to federal regulation, patients are assigned to a pharmacy that is assigned to each Community Health Center (CHC). For example, East Austin CHC patients are assigned to the pharmacy on Riverside; patients at Jonestown are assigned to a specific pharmacy that is located in Cedar Park. The patients in Manor are assigned to the pharmacy at Rundberg. The patients at Northeast are assigned to the pharmacy at Capitol Plaza; the patients at the Pflugerville CHC are assigned to the pharmacy in Pflugerville; etc. The patient must go to the assigned pharmacy in order for us to be able to purchase the drug at the deeply discounted 340(b) drug price. .

4. Do the health care clinics provide emergency contraception?

Response: Yes, emergency contraception is available according to established treatment protocols for patients of the federally qualified health centers (FQHCs). The federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) have historically provided this service.

5. If a client needs emergency contraception but does not need to go to the emergency room (lets say the condom broke) and it's the weekend so the health clinics are closed, where would they go to get emergency contraception? Who would prescribe it?

Response: The patient would call our after hours triage nurse. The patient may go to a clinic on the following day except for Sundays and Holidays to access emergency contraception. If there is sufficient time, the patient will be directed to the CHC for an appointment. Patients are directed to South Austin CHC or Planned Parenthood on Saturdays for emergency contraception services.

6. What does CCSD stand for?

Response: Community Care Services Department. Within this department, there are three divisions, Community Health Centers, Patient Services and Administrative Services.

7. It's my understanding that Walgreens only dispenses these prescriptions on an exception basis, requiring pre-approval by the CCSD. Please explain what the pre-approval process entails. How would that work with emergency contraception?

Response: A Walgreen's representatives would call CCSD staff who are specifically assigned to work with Walgreen's, The CCSD staff give Walgreen's authorization for dispensing the medication. Guidelines are in place for pre-approving these medications. To pre-approve a medication, CCSD's Staff go on-line and pre-approve the prescription directly into Walgreen's system so that the pharmacy can process the prescription. CCSD staff work with the Medical Director of the CHCs and Walgreens to ensure access to emergency contraception for patients who made need it during holidays when a patient may be unable to access the CHCs within the designated seventy-two hour period.

Cc: **Toby Futrell, City Manager**
 Chief Michael McDonald, ACM
 David Vliet, CEO, CCSD
 Diana Granger, Purchasing Officer
 Urcha Dunbar-Crespo, Deputy Purchasing Officer
 Sandy Zimmerman, Law Department
 Kay Boccella, Law Department