

## Step Therapy

**Auburn University requires an approval process when a prescription for a proton pump inhibitor (PPI) is filled.**

Auburn University requires a trial of a step-one drug before approval will be made for any step-two medications. Step-one drugs are safe and effective medications that are less expensive than the medications listed in step two. Therefore, Auburn University is requiring that our beneficiaries try a trial of step-one therapy medications before progressing to a step two alternative. The process is being implemented for proton pump inhibitor medications, but might be expanded to other medications in the future. Therefore, this list might be updated.

Medical Condition (Medication Class)	Step One Medication	Step Two Medication	Step Three Medication
Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPI)	Omeprazole (generic)	Pantoprazole (generic)	Nexium®

**The following is an outline of the step therapy process:**

If a proton pump inhibitor medication (PPI) is required, then all AU health plan subscribers with AU Group number 37655 or 02520, must try the most cost-effective PPI within this medication class before progressing to other treatment options within this drug class.

### **Step 1:**

Omeprazole (generic Prilosec®). Omeprazole is dosed at 20 to 40 mg per day for most indications. You must try at least 4 weeks of omeprazole before progressing to the next step of therapy. Omeprazole is a generic, and would have a \$0 co-pay through the TigerMeds program, or a \$10 co-pay at external pharmacies.

### **Step 2:**

Pantoprazole (generic Protonix®). If the physician or prescriber determines that another PPI is necessary (other than omeprazole) after a trial of omeprazole, then the

next step will be generic pantoprazole. Pantoprazole is dosed at 40 mg per day for most indications. The patient must use pantoprazole for at least 4 weeks to assess whether this medication controls the patient's symptoms before progressing to step 3. Pantoprazole is a generic, and has a \$0 co-pay through the TigerMeds program, or a \$10 co-pay at external pharmacies.

### **Step 3:**

Nexium®. If the physician or prescriber determines that another PPI is necessary (other than pantoprazole) after a trial of pantoprazole, then the next step will be brand name Nexium®. Nexium is dosed at 20 to 40 mg per day for most indications. Nexium® is a non-preferred brand name medication, and it will have a \$60.00 co-pay at all pharmacies.

The AU PPI formulary (medication list) will be limited to these three highly effective medications used for the management of many common gastrointestinal conditions. There are also several PPIs now available over the counter (such as omeprazole, Prilosec®, Prevacid®, and Zegerid®). Please encourage your prescriber to initiate therapy with omeprazole (which is the most cost effective PPI for you and for AU) and then progress to Step 2 and Step 3 options only when necessary. AU will not cover any part of a prescription bill for any non-prescription PPIs which can be purchased over the counter without a prescription, and will not pay any portion of the prescription bill for Aciphex®, Kapidex®, Protonix® (available as a generic in step 2- see mandatory generic policy), Prevacid® (available over the counter), or Zegerid® (available over the counter).

If you would like more information or require assistance concerning your PPI therapy, please call the Auburn University Pharmaceutical Care Center (AUPCC) at (334) 844-4099 or e-mail [aupcc4u@auburn.edu](mailto:aupcc4u@auburn.edu). Pharmacists are available to respond to your questions and assist you with implementation of this pharmacy benefit change. This is a free service for all employees and dependents.

