



**INLAND EMPIRE HEALTH PLAN**

July 21, 2010

Dear IEHP Provider:

This letter provides important information concerning recent labeling changes for Advair<sup>®</sup> (fluticasone/salmeterol), Foradil<sup>®</sup> (formoterol), Serevent<sup>®</sup> (salmeterol), and Symbicort<sup>®</sup> (formoterol/budesonide), and IEHP policy/criteria in relation to its FDA approved indication for Asthma.

**---Important Drug Information---**

February 2010, the FDA announced it was requiring manufacturers to revise their drug labels because of an increased risk of severe exacerbation of asthma symptoms, leading to hospitalizations, in pediatric and adult patients, as well as death in some patients using Long Acting Beta Agonists (LABAs) for the treatment of asthma. The new recommendations in the updated labels state:

- Use of a LABA alone without use of a long-term asthma control medication (e.g. inhaled corticosteroid) is contraindicated in the treatment of asthma.
- LABAs or LABA combination products should NOT be used in patients whose asthma is adequately controlled on low or medium dose inhaled corticosteroids.
- LABAs or LABA combination products should only be used as adjunct therapy for patients with asthma who are currently taking but are not adequately controlled on a long-term asthma control medication (e.g. inhaled corticosteroid).
- Once asthma control is achieved and maintained, patients should be assessed at regular intervals and step down therapy should begin (i.e. discontinue LABA) without the loss of asthma control and should continue to be treated with a long-term asthma control medication.

**---IEHP Formulary Criteria---**

The current IEHP criteria was developed and reviewed by the IEHP Pharmacy and Therapeutics Subcommittee:

- Non-formulary requests will be approved if the member has tried and failed (2) first line formulary inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) for at least 2 months

Formulary ICS	Non-Formulary ICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QVAR (beclomethasone)</li> <li>• Aerobid (flunisolide)</li> <li>• Azmacort (triamcinolone)</li> <li>• Flovent (fluticasone)</li> <li>• Pulmicort (budesonide)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advair (fluticasone/salmeterol)</li> <li>• Symbicort (budesonide/formoterol)</li> </ul>

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**INLAND EMPIRE HEALTH PLAN**

We welcome any recommendations and comments regarding the formulary. Please call us at (909) 890-2067, with your questions and/or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Inland Empire Health Plan  
Pharmaceutical Services Department

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