

Addressing Nationwide ADHD Medication Shortage January 2023

At Pediatric Partners many of our patients are having trouble obtaining their ADHD stimulant medication (Ritalin, Adderall, etc.) prescriptions filled by their pharmacy. These medications are classified as Schedule II controlled Medications (C2s) by the FDA because of their potential for abuse. It is important that you know that the problem is not with the prescription (script) that our physician electronically submitted. This unfortunate problem is a result of the following factors:

- Nationwide shortages of medications (meds) due to pharmaceutical supply chain problems.
- FDA may regulate the number of ADHD meds that are dispensed
- Pharmacy chains (CVS, Walgreens, Publix, Walmart, etc.)
 - restricting the number of meds filled each month.
 - an unwillingness to provide quality customer service to both patients and doctors
 - mistakenly delete multiple scripts (multiple months) of controlled meds prescribed by our physicians
 - failing to notify patients when a second- or third-month prescription is ready for pick-up (unlike most “refills”); patients need to call the pharmacy themselves in advance of when they require their scripts to be dispensed.
 - do not keep adequate inventories for patients who are on stable medication regimens
 - often take weeks to fill prescriptions
 - will not provide the courtesy of checking with their other branches if they have the medication available.
 - many pharmacies are not accepting new patients
 - major chains (e.g., Walmart, CVS) have announced major reduction in pharmacy hours starting in March
- Insurance companies:
 - limiting which pharmacies are allowed to fill scripts for their customers (patients)
 - changing the formulary which defines which meds they will pay for, increasing the need for time-consuming prior authorizations to fill scripts.
 - restricting the exact day when pharmacies can fill a script, often only on the 28th day after the last script

In over twenty-five years of prescribing ADHD meds, we have never encountered a time when our patients had such limited access to medications which are vital to improving their quality of lives. At Pediatric Partners we are committed to continue our care in the face of these obstacles but find it necessary to change our processes so our physicians can spend time in direct patient care instead of being on hold with pharmacies.

New policies

- The time used by our staff for rerouting, changing and refilling partial scripts will be billed as an ancillary staff fee.
- In the case of a widespread unavailability for a particular medication or dose, a physician visit will be required to determine best therapeutic option and generate a new prescription.

How can you help?

- Although there are some great pharmacists working at drug store chains; we encourage you to work with an independent pharmacy, for a list of preferred pharmacies go to <https://www.pediatricpartners.com/behavioral-health-medication-policies/> They are much more likely to work with you, speak with you on the phone, usually able to order the correct med within 24 - 48 hours and often will deliver to your home.
- At each visit, please confirm your current pharmacy.
- If your pharmacy does not have the medication in stock, you will need to help locate a pharmacy that does. Legally, we can't electronically re-route controlled medication (C2s) to another pharmacy. It requires an entire new prescription which involves checking the state's prescription monitoring program (PDMP) and electronic security authentication.
- If you are unable to find the medication, please contact us and our staff will provide further assistance.
- The doctor will often send in multiple scripts (maximum of 3 months). Controlled meds do not qualify as refills and the pharmacy may not alert you when the next month's script is ready. The extra month scripts are put on “hold” by the pharmacy and will not be filled until you call the pharmacy. You should call the pharmacy (a minimum 5 days ahead) *before* you run out of medication to request the medication be prepared for you. There is no need for you to call our office as the script is already at the pharmacy system.
- Once on a stable regimen, it may be possible to order controlled medication (C2s) through a mail order pharmacy (90 days supply) which may have more med availability. Please contact your insurance company if this is a feasible option.
- We encourage our patients to schedule their next med-check appt in at the time of their current visit.

Our integrated behavioral health team is unique in the world of pediatrics; we have been nationally recognized as a leader in integrated behavioral health care in a patient centered medical home. Our team consists of pediatric psychotherapists, case managers, care coordinators, social worker and developmental specialist and of course our team of six highly well-trained pediatricians in behavioral and mental health. We are active advocates for children with special needs and will continue to be here for your child's needs, however, we believe that change in access to services will come about quicker through patient advocacy. Please call your insurance company, your pharmacy and your legislators to advocate for your child/yourself.

The Behavioral Health Team at Pediatric Partners

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