

SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Helping members, advisors and plan administrators understand when extra information is required for drug coverage.



What is Special Authorization?

Special Authorization is a process that applies to certain prescription drugs and is used to determine whether a plan participant will be approved for coverage for a specific drug.

When Special Authorization is required, additional information is needed to consider approval, such as confirming the drug is being used for an approved use under the benefits plan, whether approval from a provincial drug program has been granted, or whether a lower-cost drug has already been tried.

Our Special Authorization drug list includes drugs that are labelled Exception Drug Status (EDS) by the Saskatchewan Drug Plan, along with other high-cost or specialty therapies, drugs with a higher risk of off-label use and drugs where lower-cost alternatives may be available.

What is Exception Drug Status?

Exception Drug Status (EDS) is a program that allows certain prescription drugs to be covered under the Saskatchewan Drug Plan when a person meets specific medical criteria.

The Saskatchewan Drug Plan helps eligible Saskatchewan residents reduce the cost of prescription drugs listed on the provincial formulary. Coverage and costs depend on the specific Drug Plan program a person qualifies for, such as programs for seniors, children or people with high drug costs.

A prescriber, nurse practitioner or pharmacist submits an EDS request to the Saskatchewan Drug Plan so they can determine whether EDS will be approved.

To determine if a drug is listed with EDS in Saskatchewan, you can:

- Ask your prescriber or pharmacist;
- Contact Saskatchewan Blue Cross for verification; or
- Use the [Saskatchewan Drug Plan's Online Formulary search](#).

What does an EDS approval mean in relation to Special Authorization?

Saskatchewan Blue Cross follows the same medical approval criteria used by the Saskatchewan Drug Plan. This means that if you live in Saskatchewan, EDS approval will satisfy the Special Authorization requirements through Saskatchewan Blue Cross. This approach helps align private benefits coverage with Saskatchewan's public drug programs. It also helps keep benefit plans affordable for employers and plan sponsors, while reducing potential out-of-pocket costs for members.

If you live outside of Saskatchewan, you cannot apply to the Saskatchewan Drug Plan for EDS.

Instead, your prescriber, nurse practitioner or pharmacist may apply to a similar special access program in your province, if one is available. If no comparable program exists, they may complete a [Prescription Drug Special Authorization Request Form](#) and submit it directly to Saskatchewan Blue Cross.

Saskatchewan Blue Cross will accept approvals granted by comparable special access programs. If a Special Authorization Request Form is submitted instead, it will be reviewed using the same EDS criteria applied in Saskatchewan.

Why Special Authorization matters

- Supports appropriate, evidence-based use of medications
- Helps integrate coverage with available government programs to reduce costs
- Reinforces plan sustainability in the face of increasing drug costs and encourages cost-effective treatment
- Helps manage access to high-cost and specialty medications and to drugs with a higher risk of off-label or inappropriate use

**Locate more information on EDS
and the Saskatchewan Drug Plan:**

Check whether a drug needs Special Authorization

Plan members can log into the Saskatchewan Blue Cross Member Portal or Mobile App to confirm the status of a drug.

Member Portal:

Navigate to [My coverage](#), then to [Prescription drugs](#). Click on the “**Check if a drug is eligible on your plan**” button and complete the required fields.

Member Mobile App:

Navigate to [My coverage](#), then to [Prescription drugs](#). Tap on “**Go to Drugs search**” at the top of the page. Complete the required fields.

After entering the drug name or DIN into the field on the **Drugs: Search** page and selecting the correct drug from the results, you will see one of the following coverage response messages:

Coverage response	Action required
✔ Drug is a benefit.	You're covered – <u>no Special Authorization is required</u> .
✘ Drug is not a benefit.	The drug is <u>not eligible for reimbursement</u> under your plan. Special Authorization or EDS approval <u>cannot</u> change this outcome.
✘ Special Authorization Form or EDS letter is required.	This means the drug <u>may be eligible</u> , but more information is needed before determining coverage. Contact our Member Experience team for more information.
	What you need to submit depends on the drug; please review the table below.

What to submit if the Special Authorization drug is listed with EDS in Saskatchewan

If you are a resident of Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An EDS approval letter from the Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch (DPEBB) showing the approved drug, effective date and expiry date (if applicable) is required to receive Special Authorization approval. Once received by mail from the DPEBB, submit a copy of this letter to Saskatchewan Blue Cross. A Prescription Drug Special Authorization Request Form is not required.
If you live outside of Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A decision letter from a comparable special access program, if one exists in your province. If your province does not offer an equivalent special access program, or if your prescriber or pharmacist has not applied to it, you will need to provide a completed Prescription Drug Special Authorization Request Form. Your approval may still depend on an application being submitted to a comparable program if one is available in your province, but Saskatchewan Blue Cross, your prescriber or your pharmacist can help you determine what applies in your situation.

What to submit for other Special Authorization drugs not listed with EDS

Complete the applicable Special Authorization Request Form (available on our website under Member Centre > Forms & Documents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Wegovy, Saxenda, Contrave, Xenical or Zepbound, use: Chronic Weight Management Prescription Drug Special Authorization Request Form For all other drugs, use: Prescription Drug Special Authorization Request Form Submit forms with any supporting medical documentation relevant to the request.
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How to submit your Special Authorization form or EDS letter

Claimants can submit completed forms to Saskatchewan Blue Cross using one of the following options:

Member Portal or App: Upload using the secure “Submit a Document” tool
Email: providerrelations@sk.bluecross.ca
In person: Saskatoon: 516 2nd Ave North
 Regina: 100–2275 Albert Street

Fax: (306) 667-5860
Mail: Attn: Claims Department
 Saskatchewan Blue Cross
 516 2nd Avenue North, PO Box 4030
 Saskatoon, SK S7K3T2



Your questions, answered.

How long does EDS processing and Special Authorization review take?

EDS requests can be submitted by prescribers and pharmacies at any time by telephone, fax, mail or through the online EDS Application Dashboard. These requests are reviewed daily by the Saskatchewan Drug Plan. While some approvals are processed instantly through the Online EDS Adjudication (OEA) system used by pharmacies and prescribers, requests submitted by telephone, fax or mail may still require manual review and result in a decision letter being mailed to the patient or provider.

Requests submitted by phone can often be completed right away when all required information is available. Processing times can vary if additional clarification is needed from the prescriber or if request volumes are high.

Once Saskatchewan Blue Cross receives the decision letter, updates to our internal system are typically completed within 5 business days, with an average processing time of 2.5 business days.

Most Prescription Drug Special Authorization Request Forms are reviewed and issued a decision within 10 business days, once complete documentation has been received.

How many drugs are on the Special Authorization drug listing?

Just over 2,000 Drug Identification Numbers (DINs) are currently on our list, however, the list is fluid and subject to ongoing changes and updates.

Where do I find the Special Authorization eligibility criteria?

Eligibility criteria vary by medication and may change over time. For this reason, they aren't posted publicly. Please contact us if you need details for a specific drug; we're happy to help.

Where can I get additional support throughout the Special Authorization process?

If you have questions regarding your application or Saskatchewan Blue Cross forms and documents, you may call our **Member Experience Centre toll-free at 1-800-667-6853**. You can also fill out the Contact form on your Member Portal or Mobile App to reach the Saskatchewan Blue Cross team through email.

For those seeking further assistance or clarification regarding EDS or the Saskatchewan Drug Program, support is available directly through the **Government of Saskatchewan, toll-free at 1-800-667-2549**.

THE APPEALS PROCESS

If your Special Authorization request is denied, you may submit an appeal within three months.

You must include:

- A written explanation of the reason for the appeal
- Any additional clinical or supporting information

Most appeal decisions are issued within one month of receiving complete documentation.

Important links

SK Drug Formulary

- <https://formulary.drugplan.ehealthsask.ca/>

SK Provincial Drug Plan

- <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/prescription-drug-plans-and-health-coverage/extended-benefits-and-drug-plan/saskatchewan-drug-plan>

Government of SK EDS Information

- <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/prescription-drug-plans-and-health-coverage/extended-benefits-and-drug-plan/exception-drug-status>

Saskatchewan Blue Cross Forms

- <https://www.sk.bluecross.ca/forms/>

Saskatchewan Blue Cross Member Portal

- <https://portal.sk.bluecross.ca/>