



Pearl Health Clinic, PLLC

2705 E 17th ST • Ammon, ID 83406 • 208.346.7500 • fax 208.346.7501

Executive Director
Thana Singarajah, Ed.D.,
LCPC, NCC
Clinical Asst. Professor, ISU

Date: Monday, November 7, 2016

From: Stephen DeNagy, MD

**Medical & Psychiatric
Services**
Stephen DeNagy, M.D., ASCP
Medical Director
Behavioral Medicine Specialist
Certified in Clinical
Psychopharmacology
And Internal Medicine, ABIM

To: Tammy Eide, Pharm. D.

RE: Access to Abilify Maintena

I am writing to advocate for greater access for injectable antipsychotic agents, in this case, Abilify Maintena. I am well aware that there are other options. We find that Abilify Maintena is extremely effective. I am sure this looks bad on the budget, but there is absolutely no question that we are able to keep patients out of the hospital because of this treatment. The advantages include reliable blood levels, very physically tolerable, and mechanically simple administration.

We use all the available forms, though we rarely use the oil-based typical agents. That class, while cheaper, suffers from being unreliable with regard to biological effects, much worse with regard to side effects, and eventually ineffective because of the accumulation of the oil-based vehicle.

Specifically, I would appreciate Abilify Maintena being placed on the preferred list. There are too few agents available to establish one as preferred. From time to time we find a person able to tolerate Abilify Maintena, and not Invega—and vice versa. Abilify Maintena more often manifests akathisia, but Invega Sustenna seems to us to have more in the way of metabolic and dystonic side effects. However, when these drugs are effective and tolerated, both are extremely useful in maintaining stability. And when our psychotic patients refuse medication, there is slow enough of a decline in serum levels such that there is time to regain compliance. When patients suddenly d/c their oral agents, the deterioration is very rapid and severe, and we rarely can avoid hospital admission.

The window of treatment of these patients is extremely narrow. The prior authorization process adds a speed bump in the process which at times cause patients to miss the opportunity for treatment because of the deterioration of their illness. When they are ready to start, it is essential that we have access within a day or so. But the pharmacy cannot order the drug until the approval is available, and that can practically mean as long as a week when all the delays are added.

Please place Abilify Maintena on the formulary as a first line drug. Please contact me with questions.

Sincerely,

Stephen DeNagy, MD, ASCP
*Certified in Clinical Psychopharmacology by the
American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology*