



# Pharmacy Program

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**Alaska Department of Family and  
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# Pharmacy Program



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## ***Benefits of the Pharmacy Program***

The Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy Program provides pharmaceuticals and pharmacist consultation for the residents of the Alaska Pioneer Homes. The pharmacy and staff are located in the Anchorage Pioneer Home. Staff members include licensed pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and billing personnel.

The Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy Program includes several beneficial services:

### **1. Pharmacists and pharmacy staff work in conjunction with other staff members and are dedicated to serving the Alaska Pioneer Homes residents.**

The primary benefit of having a single-source pharmacy program is to have on-staff pharmacists with knowledge, experience, background and interest in geriatric pharmacy. Prescriptions for Alaska Pioneer Homes' residents are appropriately filled, packaged, and delivered daily. The Alaska Pioneer Homes pharmacists provide the following services:

- Clinical review of residents' medication regimens. Our pharmacists review all medications a resident takes to help ensure that risks of interactions and side effects are minimized.
- Communication with residents' healthcare providers concerning medication regimens.
- Overall quality assurance program.
- Staff education concerning medications.
- Resident/family education concerning medications.
- Community education to healthcare providers serving the Alaska Pioneer Homes regarding the Pioneer Home Pharmacy Program.

### **2. Greater efficiency and safety controls.**

Prior to the implementation of the Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy Program, a number of pharmacy sources were supplying medications to residents in many of the Alaska Pioneer Homes. This inevitably caused differences in the ordering, labeling, packaging, storage, and administration of medications. This fragmentation resulted in inefficiencies and potential safety problems. Solutions to these problems were found in the development of a single pharmacy that serves and supplies all six Alaska Pioneer Homes.

## ***Resident Participation and Responsibilities***

### **Resident participation in the Alaska Pioneer Home Pharmacy Program**

Anyone who resides in an Alaska Pioneer Home may purchase medications through the Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy Program. The pharmacy may or may not provide medications to residents who administer their medications independently without any intervention, reminders, or follow up by staff.

However, all residents whose medications are administered to them by Alaska Pioneer Homes' staff members or who are on the Payment Assistance Program are required to use the Pioneer Home Pharmacy. A single-source pharmacy is considered to be the safest and most efficient basis for medication administration throughout the Alaska Pioneer Homes.

Level I residents may choose to use an outside pharmacy. A resident who chooses to use an outside pharmacy will be notified by the Alaska Pioneer Home about the increased risk for medication errors or complications from drug interactions when an outside pharmacy is used. The resident will be informed that this policy, which imposes conditions for using an outside pharmacy, is intended to reduce the risk of medication errors that could cause harm to the resident and prevent additional costs to the State of Alaska.

Level I residents who also use the payment assistance program are required to use the Pioneer Home Pharmacy.

The Alaska Pioneer Homes will not refuse any resident assistance with medication administration.

### **Resident responsibilities if obtaining medications from an outside pharmacy**

1. The resident agrees to pay for all medications obtained through an outside pharmacy with the resident's available income after all Alaska Pioneer Homes charges have been met.
2. The Alaska Pioneer Homes will not subsidize the cost of medications obtained from an outside pharmacy.
3. Insurance recoveries are the responsibility of the resident.
4. The resident is responsible for ordering, procurement, and delivery of the medications from the outside pharmacy.

5. The pharmacy provider must agree to package medications in a way that is approved by the Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy in order to reduce the risk of medication errors and protect the residents' right to a safe environment.
6. A resident using an outside pharmacy must also have an agreement with the outside pharmacist to participate in care plan counseling for the resident when deemed necessary by the Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy.

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

The following section presents the most frequently requested information:

### **3. What does formulary, copay, and prior authorization mean?**

*Formulary* – A list of preferred drugs used by an institution or insurance company. This list identifies drugs that are appropriate for use in a specific population or offer the greatest overall value to an insurance company.

*Copay* – A payment made by a beneficiary in addition to that made by an insurer. The copay is the amount remaining after the insurance company pays their portion of the bill. The copay is assigned by the insurance company and the pharmacy is contractually obligated to collect that amount from the beneficiary.

*Prior Authorization* – A prior authorization is a requirement that your health provider obtain approval from your health insurance plan to prescribe a specific medication for you. If prior authorization is not obtained, when the pharmacy bills the claim online to the insurance company, the insurance company will refuse to pay until the provider has completed the prior authorization process. When the claim is denied, the pharmacy will notify the provider that they need to contact the insurance to set up the prior authorization for payment of the medication. The pharmacy is unable to apply for a prior authorization for payment of a medication, as insurance companies require that be done by the provider.

### **4. How are prescriptions/medication orders filled by the pharmacy?**

Prescriptions or medication orders are directly faxed to the Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy by the prescribing health care professional or by an Alaska Pioneer Homes staff member using a toll-free fax number. A variety of shipping methods are used to ship medications from the Alaska Pioneer Homes Pharmacy to the other Alaska Pioneer Homes.

Medications are delivered directly to the designated Alaska Pioneer Home staff members who are responsible for receiving and appropriately storing the

resident's medications. Medications are sent to the six Alaska Pioneer Homes Monday-Friday daily.

**5. I just got refills of my medications prior to moving into a Pioneer Home, can I use them first before buying these medications through the Pioneer Home Pharmacy?**

Residents and their families are encouraged to talk with the nursing staff about medication management prior to moving into a Pioneer Home. Some medications brought into the home can be administered by nursing staff while others cannot. As such, please do not "stock up" on medications prior to moving into a Pioneer Home. For safety purposes, Level II, III, IV, and V residents are required to use the Pioneer Home Pharmacy, Veterans Administration Pharmacy or Indian Health Service Pharmacy upon moving into the home. Level I residents may also use the Pioneer Home Pharmacy or they can request the use of an outside pharmacy upon written approval from the Alaska Pioneer Homes division director.

**6. How are refills obtained?**

All medications for which a refill has been prescribed are refilled by the pharmacy. Some medications are refilled automatically while others must be requested. Generic medications in tablet form, which are taken on a routine schedule, are automatically dispensed, per federal regulation, every 28 days by the pharmacy. Name brand medications are dispensed every 14 days, per federal regulations. Medications taken only as needed or medications in non-tablet form such as liquids, eye drops, and patches, are dispensed by the pharmacy upon request from a designated Alaska Pioneer Home staff member. Staff members also monitor the resident's supply of medications and request medication refills from the pharmacy as needed.

**7. How long does it take for medications shipped from the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy to arrive?**

Medications are shipped from the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy once each working day. Prescriptions, medication orders, or refill requests received after daily shipping has occurred are sent the next working day. It may take up to three to five working days for newly ordered medications to arrive at an Alaska Pioneer Home. In addition, if a newly ordered medication is not currently in stock at the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy and must be specially obtained prior to shipment, the order may take up to five working days to arrive at an Alaska Pioneer Home.

**8. What happens when a resident requires a medication sooner than delivery**

### **can occur?**

For medications needed immediately, prescriptions/medication orders can be partially filled from a stock supply of medications available at each Alaska Pioneer Home. If the medication is not available in the stock supply, it can be acquired at a local pharmacy.

### **9. Will prescriptions be filled with brand name medications or generic medications?**

All prescriptions, when possible, are filled with the generic equivalent. Not all medications are available in a generic form. Some drugs are protected by patents or are supplied by a single company. In these instances, the prescription is filled with the brand name medication, but labeled generically.

### **10. What is the difference between a generic and a brand name drug?**

Besides the name and price, there is very little difference. Generic drugs must be therapeutically equivalent. This means they contain the same chemical ingredient, have the same medical effect, and are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for substitution for brand name drugs.

### **11. Are generic drugs safe?**

Yes. Both generic and brand name drugs are regulated by the FDA. Generic and brand name drugs are tested and approved in the same way. Manufacturers of generic medications must prove to the FDA that a product contains equal amounts of the same active ingredient, and that a generic equivalent has the same medical effect as its brand name counterpart.

### **12. How are over-the-counter medications obtained?**

Alaska Pioneer Homes requires a prescription for over-the-counter medications, and the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy provides these medications in the same manner as prescription medications. Requiring a prescription for over-the-counter medications helps to ensure that a resident's prescribing health care provider has approved all medications. Also, with this system, the Pioneer Homes pharmacists and staff are aware of each medication taken by a resident and can screen all medications for harmful side effects and interactions with other medications.

### **13. Does the pharmacy stock items such as supplements?**

The pharmacy stocks United States Pharmacopeia (USP) verified dietary supplements. The Alaska Pioneer Home system requires that the supplements are held to the USP standard to ensure the potency and purity of the product. In order for the nurse to administer these supplements to a resident, the doctor

must write an order for the supplement and it must be obtained from the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy.

The Pioneer Homes Pharmacy has a formulary list of all USP verified dietary supplements that are available from the pharmacy. The formulary is a list of preferred drugs used by an institution or insurance company. This list identifies drugs that are appropriate for use in a specific population or offer the greatest overall value to an insurance company. If the resident wishes to use a dietary supplement that is not on the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy formulary list, that supplement must have a doctor's order and the family is responsible for acquiring and administering it to the resident.

#### **14. Does a resident have to be enrolled in Medicare even if they have private insurance?**

Alaska state regulation 7 AAC 74.015 (g) states that admission to or continued residence in an Alaska Pioneer Home will not be approved unless the person provides proof, from the U.S. Social Security Administration, that the person is currently enrolled in:

- Medicare Part A (42 U.S.C. 1395c – 1395i-5); and
- Medicare Part B (42 U.S.C. 1395j – 1395w-5) coverage under the Social Security Act; and
- Medicare Part D (42 U.S.C. 1395w-101 – 1395w-154) under the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003;
- OR has private medical insurance providing coverage at least as extensive as that provided by Medicare Parts A, B, and D.

If the person is not currently enrolled in Medicare Parts A, B, and D and the general enrollment period open for Medicare Parts A, B, and D for a calendar year has passed, the person may satisfy the requirements of this subsection by providing evidence from the U.S. Social Security Administration that the person has applied for Medicare Parts A, B, and D during the last open enrollment. If a person is not eligible for Medicare Parts A, B, and D, the person must provide evidence of ineligibility from the U.S. Social Security Administration.

Alaska Pioneer Homes Policy and Procedure 03.01 Eligibility and Application states as part of the applicant requirements that an applicant must have Medicare Parts A and D or the equivalent. Proof that a person has applied for Medicare Part A, B, and D during the last open enrollment period is sufficient. Private medical insurance providing coverage as extensive as Medicare may be substituted. Proof



of Medicare Part A, Part B, and Part D, or private medical insurance are required forms for admission.

### **15. How does billing for medications occur?**

Alaska Pioneer Homes' residents are billed once a month. Pharmacy charges are included on the resident's monthly statement along with their level of service charges and supplies charges. This provides the resident the convenience of making one payment each month. Payment can be made by check, Visa, or MasterCard. The monthly billing includes:

- A statement identifying charges for room and board rate, residential service rate, supplies and, if the resident receives items from the Pioneer Home Pharmacy, pharmaceuticals. The pharmacy charges on the statement are the resident's responsibility to pay.
- An itemized list of the individual pharmaceuticals dispensed during the month. This list is provided for information purposes and can be submitted to insurance companies for cost reimbursement. When the pharmacy bills insurance companies electronically, the charges on the itemized list are the resident's co-payment amounts. For all others, the charges on the itemized list are the total charges for each medication.

### **16. Does the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy bill insurance companies directly?**

Currently, the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy has the capacity to electronically bill most major insurance plans/companies for medications distributed from the pharmacy. If any resident's insurance company is not available for electronic billing, the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy staff will assist the resident in filing the insurance company by mail. To ensure the pharmacy is able to submit claims for reimbursement, it is important that a copy of both sides of the resident's insurance card is on file with the pharmacy. The pharmacy billing clerk needs the resident's insurance information card to properly bill insurance companies on behalf of the resident.

### **17. How does the pharmacy notify residents if a prior-authorization needs to be done?**

An institutional pharmacy, like the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy, cannot withhold a medication based on payment, so the pharmacy usually fills an order as written once it has been received into the pharmacy. The pharmacy bills the medication as they are filling the order. If the insurance asks for a prior authorization, the pharmacy notifies the provider right away. If the prior authorization is denied, the pharmacy will then notify the resident or responsible party.

## **18. How does the pharmacy notify residents if the medication needed is not on the formulary?**

The formulary is a list of preferred drugs used by an institution or insurance company. This list identifies drugs that are appropriate for use in a specific population or offer the greatest overall value to an insurance company

The Pioneer Homes Pharmacy maintains a formulary of medications that are appropriate for use in the Alaska Pioneer Homes population. If a prescribed medication is not on the pharmacy formulary, the pharmacy will ask the provider if a medication already on the formulary would be acceptable. The provider may choose to use the formulary option. If the provider prefers a non-formulary medication, the pharmacy will special order it. Having a formulary is also helpful in containing the costs of medications. The Pioneer Home Pharmacy formulary of medications is available online at the following link:

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/daph/Pages/pharmacy/default.aspx>

Most insurance companies maintain formularies as a cost containment tool. If a medication is not on their formulary (or preferred drug list), the insurance company will usually decline payment for the medication, assign a higher copay to the medication, or require a prior authorization before paying for the medication.

## **19. Why do my medications cost more with the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy?**

The Pioneer Homes Pharmacy is an institutional pharmacy and dispenses medications on a monthly cycle. This billing will result in a monthly copay for each medication. The copay amount is determined by the insurance company, not the pharmacy.

## **20. Why can't the pharmacy tell me what my medications will cost?**

The pharmacy can run an online test claim with your insurance company and receive back an estimated copay. The amount charged by the pharmacy for a prescription medication is called the copay. The copay is determined by the insurance company, not the pharmacy. Please contact the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy billing department directly for questions about the cost of a specific medication, at toll free 888-546-7294.

## **21. When are the statements mailed?**

The statements are post marked by the fifth day of each month.

## **22. Where should payment be sent?**

***An addressed envelope is enclosed with all statements. Payments are mailed to: Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes Attention: Revenue Unit***

***PO Box 110690  
Juneau, AK 99811-0690***

For increased convenience, payments may also be deposited in the designated drop boxes located at each Alaska Pioneer Home.

To reach the Alaska Pioneer Homes Revenue Unit (billing office) call 907-465-4416

**Toll-free information number**

For answers to any questions regarding the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy, medications, or pharmacy bills, please call the Pioneers Home Pharmacy during working hours: 7 a.m. – 3 p.m., Monday through Friday (closed Saturday, Sunday and most state holidays). In Anchorage, please call 907-343-7294.

**E-mail**

For answers to questions regarding Pioneer Homes Pharmacy or medication questions that are not of an urgent nature, e-mail may be used. However, the telephone numbers above are generally the fastest way to receive information.

E-mail regarding medication/pharmacy questions may be sent to:  
[lanalondon.bell@alaska.gov](mailto:lanalondon.bell@alaska.gov)

Billing questions may be sent to: [kerri.epple@alaska.gov](mailto:kerri.epple@alaska.gov)

## **Contact Information**

For further information, please contact the Pioneer Homes Central Office at:

### **Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes**

PO Box 110690  
Juneau, AK 99811-0690

Phone: 907-465-4416

Fax: 907-465-4108

Email: [alaskapioneerhomes@alaska.gov](mailto:alaskapioneerhomes@alaska.gov)

### **Contact information for specific homes**

#### **Alaska Veterans & Pioneers Home**

250 E. Fireweed Ave.  
Palmer, AK 99645  
907-745-4241

#### **Anchorage Pioneer Home**

923 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907-276-3414

#### **Fairbanks Pioneer Home**

2221 Eagan Ave.  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
907-458-2221

#### **Juneau Pioneer Home**

4675 Glacier Hwy  
Juneau, AK 99801  
907-780-3422

#### **Ketchikan Pioneer Home**

141 Bryant St  
Ketchikan, AK 99901  
907-225-4111

#### **Sitka Pioneer Home**

120 Katlian St  
Sitka, AK 99835  
907-747-3213

### **Other important numbers:**

907-465-4029 Pioneer Home Billing (all homes)

907-465-4416 Central Office

**Pioneer Home Pharmacy: 907-343-7294**

**This booklet is one of five providing information about Alaska Pioneer Homes.**

Other booklets in the series:

About our Homes

Admissions and Discharge

A Matter of Rights

Payment Assistance

<https://dfcs.alaska.gov/daph/Pages/default.aspx>