

WAC 182-530-7050 Reimbursement—Dispensing fee determination.

(1) Subject to the provisions of WAC 182-530-7000 and the exceptions permitted in WAC 182-530-2000, the medicaid agency pays a dispensing fee for each covered, prescribed drug.

(2) The agency does not pay a dispensing fee for:

- (a) Nondrug items, devices, or drug-related supplies; or
- (b) Drugs administered by a health care professional.

(3) The agency periodically examines the sufficiency of pharmacy dispensing fees and may adjust the dispensing fee by considering factors including, but not limited to:

- (a) Legislative appropriations for vendor rates;
- (b) Input from provider and advocacy groups;
- (c) Input from state-employed or contracted actuaries; and
- (d) Dispensing fees paid by other third-party payers including,

but not limited to, health care plans and other states' medicaid agencies.

(4) The agency uses a tiered dispensing fee system which pays higher volume pharmacies at a lower fee and lower volume pharmacies at a higher fee.

(5) The agency uses total annual prescription volume (both medicaid and nonmedicaid) reported to the agency to determine each pharmacy's dispensing fee tier. The following tier levels are effective for dates of service on and after July 1, 2023:

(a) A pharmacy which fills 70,000 or more prescriptions annually is a high-volume pharmacy. The agency considers hospital-based pharmacies that serve both inpatient and outpatient clients as high-volume pharmacies.

(b) A pharmacy which fills between 30,000 and 69,999 prescriptions annually is a mid-volume pharmacy.

(c) A pharmacy which fills less than 30,000 prescriptions annually is a low-volume pharmacy.

(6) The agency determines a pharmacy's annual total prescription volume as follows:

(a) The agency sends out a prescription volume survey form to pharmacy providers during the first quarter of the calendar year;

(b) Pharmacies return completed prescription volume surveys to the agency each year. Pharmacy providers not responding to the survey by the specified date are assigned to the high volume category;

(c) Pharmacies must include all prescriptions dispensed from the same physical location in the pharmacy's total prescription count;

(d) The agency considers prescriptions dispensed to nursing facility clients as outpatient prescriptions; and

(e) Assignment to a new dispensing fee tier is effective on the first of the month, following the date specified by the agency.

(7) A pharmacy may request a change in dispensing fee tier during the interval between the annual prescription volume surveys. The pharmacy must substantiate such a request with documentation showing that the pharmacy's most recent six-month dispensing data, annualized, would qualify the pharmacy for the new tier. If the agency receives the documentation by the twentieth of the month, assignment to a new dispensing fee tier is effective on the first of the following month.

(8) The agency grants general dispensing fee rate increases only when authorized by the legislature. Amounts authorized for dispensing fee increases may be distributed nonuniformly (e.g., tiered dispensing fee based upon volume).

(9) The agency may pay true unit dose pharmacies at a different rate for unit dose dispensing.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 41.05.021 and 41.05.160. WSR 24-03-170, § 182-530-7050, filed 1/24/24, effective 2/24/24; WSR 17-07-001, § 182-530-7050, filed 3/1/17, effective 4/1/17; WSR 16-01-046, § 182-530-7050, filed 12/9/15, effective 1/9/16. WSR 11-14-075, recodified as § 182-530-7050, filed 6/30/11, effective 7/1/11. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.08.090, 74.09.530, and 74.09.700. WSR 07-20-049, § 388-530-7050, filed 9/26/07, effective 11/1/07.]