

March 2010



## PLAN UPDATE

Health Canada has reclassified many over-the-counter (OTC) products as natural health products. The intent of this change is to create a process to evaluate natural health products to ensure their safety, effectiveness, quality and accurate labeling.

As of January 1, 2010, many OTC products changed from having a Drug Identification Number (DIN) to a Natural Product Number (NPN) or a Drug Identification Number specific to Homeopathic Medicine (DIN-HM). The reclassification has changed the eligibility of these products under group benefit plans.

The impact to Pacific Blue Cross plans is as follows:

- Life-sustaining drugs that do not require a prescription such as nitroglycerin, insulin, diabetic supplies including test strips, lancets and syringes will continue to be covered in accordance with your contract because they will retain their current status.
- Prescription-strength vitamins will continue to be covered in accordance with your contract because they will retain their current status.
- **If your plan covers smoking cessation products, the following change will be effective as of April 1, 2010.** Please inform your employees. Smoking cessation products that legally require a prescription (e.g., Zyban) will continue to be covered. **Products that no longer have a Drug Identification Number and do not require a prescription (e.g., nicotine patches, nicotine gum) can no longer be covered.**

If you have any questions or require assistance to communicate this information to your plan members, please contact your Account Manager.

Sincerely,

Pacific Blue Cross