

administrator's responsibility for first level appeals related to pharmacy benefit coverage issues to our Pharmacy Benefit Manager.

2. Within five business days, the WSHIP administrator will respond to the person in writing confirming receipt of the appeal request, the date it was received, the nature of the complaint and the resolution requested.
3. WSHIP's administrator will investigate the complaint, considering all information submitted by the person, and make its decision within 30 days of receipt of the complete information needed to respond to the appeal.
4. WSHIP's administrator will notify the person of its decision in writing and inform the person of any further appeal options. The written notice will explain the decision and any supporting coverage or clinical reasons and will specifically refer to any supporting documents. If WSHIP's administrator fails to make its decision within 30 days of its receipt of the complete information needed to respond to the appeal, such failure is deemed to be an adverse decision and the person may appeal to the next level.
5. If a complaint involves denial of coverage of a service, and the person provides written notice to WSHIP's administrator of a need for a speedy appeal process because the regular appeals process timelines could seriously jeopardize the person's life, health or ability to regain maximum function, WSHIP's administrator will provide its written decision within 72 hours of receipt of the appeal request.

B. Appeal to WSHIP's Grievance Committee (Second Level)

1. The person, or his or her authorized representative, must notify WSHIP's administrator of his or her request for appeal to WSHIP's grievance committee within 90 days of an adverse decision by WSHIP's administrator and include a written description of the complaint.
2. Within five business days, WSHIP's administrator will respond to the person in writing confirming receipt of the appeal request, the date it was received, the nature of the complaint and the resolution requested. Within two business days of sending this notice, WSHIP's administrator will forward the appeal, with all relevant information from its files, to the WSHIP's grievance committee.
3. WSHIP's grievance committee will investigate the complaint, considering all information submitted by the person, and make its decision within 30 days of its receipt of the complete information needed to respond to the appeal. The grievance committee may engage independent medical and legal experts to assist in the review process.
4. WSHIP's grievance committee will notify the person of its decision in writing and inform the person of any further appeal options. The written notice will explain the decision and any supporting coverage or clinical reasons and will specifically refer to any supporting documents. If WSHIP's grievance committee fails to make its decision within 30 days of its receipt of the complete information needed to respond to the appeal, such failure is deemed to be an adverse decision and the person may appeal to the next level (if applicable).
5. If a complaint involves denial of coverage of a service, and the person provides written notice to WSHIP's administrator of a need for a speedy appeal process because the regular appeals process timelines could seriously jeopardize the person's life, health, or ability to regain maximum function, WSHIP's grievance committee will provide its written decision within 72 hours of its receipt of the appeal request.

III. EXTERNAL APPEAL PROCESS (Third Level)

- A. If WSHIP's grievance committee affirms a decision to deny, modify, reduce, or terminate coverage of or payment for health services, the person may appeal the decision to an IRO by notifying the WSHIP administrator within 30 days of receipt of the grievance committee's written decision.
- B. The administrator will gather all relevant documents and deliver them to the IRO within three business days of receiving the person's request for appeal.
- C. The IRO, made up of persons not associated with WSHIP, will review the complaint and make a decision. The IRO will provide its decision in writing to the person and WSHIP within 20 days of the person's request for appeal. WSHIP will pay the charges for the IRO's review and written report.

IV. SERVICES DURING APPEAL PROCESS

If the complaint is from a WSHIP enrollee contesting a coverage decision and such decision was based on a finding of no medical necessity, WSHIP will continue to provide the service until the appeal is completed. Upon completion of the appeal process, if WSHIP continued to provide the service in question and it is determined that the coverage was properly denied, WSHIP may charge the enrollee for the cost of the services provided.