

October 2020

**OVERVIEW:**

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) has identified the questionable prescription and dispensation of drugs (primarily, antifungal and antibiotic medications) for use in footbaths and soaks. Beneficiaries are instructed to mix these drugs with water and to soak their feet in the resulting mixture. Beneficiaries are told that these footbaths will treat or prevent diseases including diabetic ulcers, bone infections, ingrown toenails, pitted keratolysis, and cellulitis.

The following drugs are commonly dispensed in this footbath scheme:

<b>Corticosteroids</b>	<b>Antifungals</b>	<b>Antibiotics</b>
Budesonide	Ciclopirox Olamine	Ciprofloxacin HCl
Clobetasol Propionate	Clotrimazole	Clindamycin HCl
Fluocinonide	Econazole Nitrate	Clindamycin Phosphate (Topical)
	Ketoconazole	Doxycycline Hyclate
	Ketoconazole (Topical)	Erythromycin (Acne Aid)
	Nystatin (topical) Oxiconazole Nitrate	Gentamicin Sulfate (Ophth)
	Terbinafine HCl	Gentamicin Sulfate (Topical)
	Voriconazole	Linezolid
		Meropenem
		Mupirocin
		Streptomycin Sulfate
		Sulfacetamide Sodium
		Tetracycline HCl
		Tobramycin
		Tobramycin Sulfate
		Vancomycin HCl

Prescribing and dispensing of these drugs is often occurring without true medical relationships. The alleged indications for the use of these combinations in this manner are not medically accepted indications (MAIs). These drugs may have limited ability to work topically in a footbath as prescribed and dispensed. In addition, they may be harmful to patients if used as dispensed and may contribute to drug resistance.

Specific reasons to avoid prescribing and dispensing these drugs for footbaths and soaks include:

- The drugs involved have limited ability to work topically in a footbath as prescribed and dispensed.
- Footbaths are not the standard of care when treating foot infections such as cellulitis or diabetic ulcers.
- Footbath instructions conflict with typical drug information and patient education provided at the pharmacy. Harm can occur due to confusion regarding the atypical directions for drug products.
- Millions of dollars have been paid for potentially fraudulent combinations of these drugs.

To help protect our members while continuing to cover necessary medications, ABHLA:

- will pay for physician administered drugs only as a medical benefit when billed with an appropriate J-code.
- will continue to apply quantity, age, duration, and other safety edits in alignment with FDA approved indications.
- may prior authorize drugs when safety and utilization edits are exceeded when approved by LDH, except those used for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS.

#### Questions and Support:

For questions, please contact [LAProvider@AETNA.com](mailto:LAProvider@AETNA.com) or call 1-855-242-0802 and follow the prompts.