

## **TALKING TO YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY ABOUT PUBERTAL SUPPRESSION MEDICATION COVERAGE**

You may be researching, or have already decided with your doctor what form of puberty suppression you hope to use; Lupron injections or a Supprelin/Vantas (generic version) implant. Sometimes your insurance company will have a “preferred” medication that they cover for this purpose. That doesn’t mean you can’t choose another form, but it might require an additional authorization and/or more expense on your part. Insurance authorizations are usually good for a year. **It will be extremely important for you to let us know if you have changes in your insurance coverage or treatment may be interrupted.**

### **LEGACY SPECIALTY PHARMACY**

Once your MD decides puberty suppression is appropriate, our Legacy Specialty Pharmacy will do a benefits investigation and let you know if your insurance company covers Lupron/Supprelin/Vantas, and may be able to estimate the cost to you. Usually cost estimates will be determined by the Specialty Pharmacy that your insurance uses to dispense this kind of medication. There are also sometimes co-pay cards from the manufacturer and other medication savings cards that decrease the cost to you. The Specialty Pharmacy will be able to provide this information to you.

### **MEDICATION INFORMATION**

The medications we use all work efficiently to suppress puberty, so for you it is more a matter of preference and authorization by your insurance company. The choices are: an injection every 12 weeks, or an implant left in for up to two years in the upper arm. The implant is very small, less than an inch and as big around as a toothpick. We have an example in our office if you wish to see what it looks like. Most first Lupron shots are given in our office, but most primary care MD’s will agree to give future shots in their office. This is an option if it’s more convenient for you. The implant is placed by our pediatric surgeons under mild sedation. You will have follow up labs in 6-9 weeks after starting treatment to make sure your hormones are suppressed.

If you are using Lupron, **you** will have to order it every 12 weeks from the pharmacy to be delivered to our inpatient pharmacy who will transfer it to our office for your appointment. **(If it is delivered to your home we can not give it in our clinic).**

## **COST**

The latest cost estimates we have are: Lupron \$9-10,000 per injection; Supprelin \$32-38,000 per implant; Vantas \$5-6,000 per implant. Depending on your insurance benefits, this may result in no cost to you, or a co-pay that would be determined and agreed to by you before it is ever ordered. Final cost may vary widely if going through a specialty pharmacy and then the Emanuel Inpatient Pharmacy. Please check with the representatives below before making your decision.

Here are the Financial Counselors for Emanuel/Randall – note there is an alpha split:

AA-FZ	MJ Anderson	503-413-2079
GA-OL	Edith Lopez Vargas	503-413-4051
OM-ZZ	Maria Avalos	503-413-4978

## **QUESTIONS FOR YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY**

1. Do you cover pubertal suppression medications, and if so do you cover for the diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria? (The diagnosis CPT code they might ask you for is F64.9, Gender Dysphoria)
2. What is your preferred medication for pubertal suppression, Lupron or Supprelin?
3. What criteria do you base your decision on, i.e., MD prescription and chart notes, labs and bone age x-ray? Is a letter or chart notes from a mental health provider, with diagnosis and treatment plan required in addition to information from our medical doctor's office?
4. What is your preferred specialty pharmacy, and do you have their contact information?
5. Do you cover suppression under pharmacy benefits, or is it excluded and thus requires an authorization through medical benefits?

## **SPECIAL NOTE:**

Vantas, the generic form of Supprelin, is remarkably cheaper than the brand name. If you are denied completely by your insurance company, some families have chosen to pay out of pocket for this implant, and we can send a prescription to a specialty pharmacy to be filled and delivered to peds surgery for placement.

For further questions, please contact Connie Earnest-Ritchey at 503-413-1596