Drug Coverage Decision for B.C. PharmaCare

About PharmaCare B.C. PharmaCare is a government-funded drug plan. It helps British Columbians with the cost of eligible prescription drugs and specific medical supplies.

Details of Drug Reviewed

Drug	infliximab
Originator	Remicade®
Biosimilar	Inflectra® Renflexis®
Manufacturer	Pfizer Canada Merck Canada
Submission Type	Biosimilars Initiative
Indications Affected	Crohn's disease Ulcerative colitis
Common Drug Review (CDR)	CDR reviewed Inflectra and Renflexis. For more information please see https://www.cadth.ca/about-cadth/what-we-do/products-services/cdr/reports
Provincial Review	PharmaCare is introducing a Biosimilars Initiative. In Phase 2, this will change coverage for PharmaCare-covered patients who use infliximab (Remicade) for gastrointestinal indications. Patients who use Remicade for Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, and who depend on PharmaCare coverage, must switch to using either the Inflectra® or Renflexis™ brand of infliximab. During the switch period between September 5, 2019 and March 5, 2020, coverage will be provided for all biologic and biosimilar brands, in order to provide time for patient identification, communication, discussion with prescribers, and switching. Coverage of Remicade will end on March 6, 2020, for affected patients.
Drug Coverage Decision	**Limited Coverage Benefit.** **Access the infliximab criteria from www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacarespecialauthority**
Date	September 5, 2019
Reason(s)	• To enable expansion of the PharmaCare formulary and B.C. health services, PharmaCare develops evidence-informed strategies to better optimize how our public resources are used. • Biologic drugs represent a huge portion of the annual PharmaCare budget, and biosimilars represent a correspondingly large, but unrealized, opportunity to find value that can be applied to new treatments and services. • PharmaCare is always reviewing new drugs, new indications, and existing coverage and criteria; the provincial formulary must evolve and adapt to the current market, clinical requirements, best practices, and the needs of B.C. residents and practitioners. • The safety, efficacy, immunogenicity, and therapeutic similarity of biosimilars is evidenced by a large body of clinical evidence, extensive post-market pharmacovigilance, as well as the results of the biosimilar programs in other jurisdictions. • Additional reading and study summaries are available online at

	www.gov.bc.ca/biosimilars/ • The Ministry will be carefully monitoring drug utilization, patient outcomes, and the response from patients and healthcare practitioners during and after the biosimilar initiative in B.C. •
Other Information	Affected patients must make an appointment with their prescriber to discuss switching to a biosimilar version of their medication and get a new prescription by March 5, 2020 in order to maintain their PharmaCare coverage.

The Drug Review Process in B.C.

A manufacturer submits a request to the Ministry of Health (Ministry).

An independent group called the Drug Benefit Council (DBC) gives advice to the Ministry. The DBC looks at:

- whether the drug is safe and effective
- advice from a national group called the Common Drug Review (CDR)
- what the drug costs and whether it is a good value for the people of B.C.
- ethical considerations involved with covering or not covering the drug
- input from physicians, patients, caregivers, patient groups and drug submission sponsors

The Ministry makes PharmaCare coverage decisions by taking into account:

- the existing PharmaCare policies, programs and resources
- the evidence-informed advice of the DBC
- the drugs already covered by PharmaCare that are used to treat similar medical conditions
- the overall cost of covering the drug

Visit the The Drug Review Process in B.C. - Overview and Ministry of Health - PharmaCare for more information.

This document is intended for information only.
It does not take the place of advice from a physician or other qualified health care provider.