

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	Patiromer
Brand Name	Veltassa®
Dosage Forms	Powder for oral suspension as 8.4 g sachets and 16.8 g sachets
Manufacturer	Otsuka Canada Pharmaceutical Inc.
Submission Type	New Submission
Use Reviewed	Veltassa® is indicated for the treatment of hyperkalemia in patients with chronic kidney disease Stage 3-4 on Renin-Angiotensin Aldosterone System Inhibitors (RAASI).
Common Drug Review (CDR)	Yes, CDR recommended: to Reimburse with clinical criteria and/or conditions. Visit the CDR website for more details: www.cadth.ca/node/88649
Provincial Review	The Drug Benefit Council (DBC) screens drug submissions under review by the CDR to determine whether a full DBC review is necessary, based on past DBC reviews, recommendations, and existing PharmaCare coverage. If a full DBC review is determined to not be required, the Ministry's drug coverage decision will be based on the Canadian Drug Expert Committee (CDEC) recommendation and an internal review only. The DBC screened patiromer on December 7, 2020. The DBC advised that, because patiromer is similar to some of the other drugs used for the treatment of hyperkalemia in patients with chronic kidney disease, the Ministry may accept the CDEC's recommendation for patiromer.
Drug Coverage Decision	Non-Benefit
Date	July 19, 2022
Reasons	Drug coverage decision is consistent with the CDEC recommendation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patiomer was effective in reducing serum potassium levels and maintaining normal serum potassium levels in patients with chronic kidney disease who were receiving RAASi therapy. However, there were no studies that compared patiomer with other drugs in the class. • Patients expressed a desire for more palatable therapies for controlling hyperkalemia, but these outcomes were not studied in OPAL-HK. • A pharmacoeconomic analysis suggest that at least an 85% price reduction is needed to ensure patiomer is cost effective. • The Ministry participated in the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance (pCPA) negotiations with the manufacturer which were not able to address the concerns with respect to the cost-effectiveness and value for money. The pCPA negotiations concluded without an agreement on February 18, 2022.
Other Information	None

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 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.