

BC PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

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The PharmaCare Newsletter is published by the Pharmaceutical Services Division to provide information to British Columbia's health care providers.

The use of PharmaNet is not intended as a substitute for professional judgment. Information on PharmaNet is not exhaustive and cannot be relied upon as complete. The absence of a warning about a drug or drug combination is not an indication that the drug or drug combination is safe, appropriate or effective in any given patient. Health care professionals should confirm information obtained from PharmaNet, and ensure no additional relevant information exists, before making patient care decisions.



MSP PREMIUM ELIMINATION

As of January 1, 2020, Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums have been eliminated. MSP enrolment is still mandatory for all B.C. residents.

All MSP account holders must ensure their account information is kept up-to-date, including their contact information.

Most pharmacy systems are able to update patient address information in PharmaNet, which will update MSP account information. Please check with patients periodically to ensure their address information is correct in PharmaNet and update it if not. Patients may also update their account information online at [Managing Your MSP Account](#).

For partial coverage of certain medical services in B.C., MSP provides [supplementary benefits](#). Applicants may qualify for supplementary benefits if they have an adjusted family net income of less than \$42,000, as confirmed by the Canada Revenue Agency. For more information on premium elimination and supplementary benefits, see [MSP Premium Elimination](#).

Financial eligibility for PharmaCare Plan G (Psychiatric Medications) is now based on eligibility for MSP supplemental benefits, rather than on eligibility for MSP Premium Assistance.

PRASUGREL (EFFIENT®) DISCONTINUED IN CANADA

Eli Lilly Canada, manufacturer of Effient® (prasugrel), discontinued its supply of the drug in Canada as of January 31, 2020. Prasugrel is a platelet inhibitor used in patients who have received a percutaneous coronary intervention for acute coronary syndrome. Patients taking prasugrel are advised to visit their cardiologist for a reassessment and to discuss their treatment options. Practitioners have already been informed of the drug discontinuation and short supply, and have been advised not to start any new patients on prasugrel. In some cases where it may be medically necessary for a patient to remain on prasugrel, the prescriber may apply to Health Canada's Special Access Programme (SAP). An approved SAP request will grant continued supply of prasugrel for a patient, provided at no cost by the manufacturer, however this stock will only be available until the end of February 2021.

HEPATITIS C SPECIAL AUTHORITY CHANGES

Effective February 4, 2020, PharmaCare accepts Special Authority (SA) requests for hepatitis C treatments submitted by nurse practitioners sufficiently experienced in treating hepatitis C.

You can find updated SA forms, criteria pages, and additional information on the PharmaCare [Special Authority website](#).

Also effective February 4, 2020, SA requests for daclatasvir (Daklinza™) will no longer be approved. The product has been discontinued. Patients with SA approval prior to February 4, 2020, will have their coverage continued until July 29, 2020. Daclatasvir will be removed as a PharmaCare benefit following a one year wash-out period to allow pharmacies to use any remaining stock.

SPECIAL AUTHORITY ACCELERATED ADJUDICATION: GLICLAZIDE AND BUPROPION ADDED

The Special Authority accelerated adjudication service (see [PharmaCare Newsletter 19-006](#)) has added the drugs gliclazide and bupropion to its list of accepted requests. The service allows prescribers to submit SA requests for a variety of medications and permits pharmacists to submit SA requests for first-line angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) and first-line proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) when they adapt first-line ARB and PPI prescriptions.

For questions about how and when pharmacists can submit SA requests for patients, refer to the [Limited Coverage Drugs](#) page for pharmacists. Note that pharmacists may not submit SA requests for gliclazide or bupropion.

BLOOD GLUCOSE TEST STRIPS FOR PLAN W PATIENTS

Diabetic patients covered under Plan W (First Nations Health Benefits) who are receiving their first fill of blood glucose test strips (BGTS) under Plan W without accessing BGTS training through a provincial Diabetes Education Centre must call the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Health Benefits team at 1 855 550-5454 to activate coverage. Pharmacists may also call on behalf of FNHA clients if no coverage is in place for first-time BGTS fills.

For a list of eligible BGTS products and PINs, see [Diabetes Product Identification Numbers](#).

Note: First-time fills for BGTS for Plan W clients are no longer covered by the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program. Do not submit claims for BGTS to NIHB.

BIOSIMILARS INITIATIVE: SWITCH DATA NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Ministry of Health now publishes data from phases one and two of the ongoing Biosimilars Initiative. You can view information such as the number of accepted PharmaNet claims for biosimilars, the monthly amount of paid patient support fees, and total number of prescribers who are switching at least one affected patient to a covered biosimilar.

Data are available online:

For pharmacists – www.gov.bc.ca/biosimilars/pharmacists

For prescribers – www.gov.bc.ca/biosimilars/prescribers

Note: Online information will be continually updated as new data is collected.

2020 PROVIDER PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The weekly and monthly provider payment schedules are available on the [pharmacist information page](#) of the PharmaCare website.

PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE CHANGES

The PharmaCare newsletter subscription tool has been updated to use a standard government web-based subscription service. All current subscribers' email addresses have been entered into the new system, and you will not need to re-subscribe. You will notice a difference in the email address sending the notifications. Please check to ensure that the notifications are not going to your "spam" or "junk" folder by setting your email program to allow email from the *gov.bc.ca* domain. The Ministry of Health will not share your email address with any other party; it will be used solely to notify you of new PharmaCare newsletter issues.

If you encounter difficulties with your PharmaCare newsletter subscription, please email us at pharma@gov.bc.ca and put "PharmaCare newsletter subscription" in the subject line. Please note that PharmaCare staff cannot manually subscribe you to the service.

To subscribe to the PharmaCare newsletter, please visit www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacarenewsletter and enter your email address in the box on the right side of the page.

REGULAR BENEFITS

The following product has been added as a regular benefit under Fair PharmaCare and PharmaCare Plans B, C, and W:

COVERAGE EFFECTIVE	December 5, 2019		
DRUG NAME	methadone (Sterinova®) (marketed by Sandoz)		
PIN*	67000017	STRENGTH AND FORM	10 mg/mL – witnessed ingestion
	67000018		10 mg/mL – delivery with witnessed ingestion
	67000019		10 mg/mL – delivery no witnessed ingestion
	67000020		10 mg/mL – no witnessed ingestion
PLAN G BENEFIT	Yes	PLAN P BENEFIT	No

*Refer to [BCCSU update: Methadone for OAT](#). Please only use the listed methadone PINs when submitting a claim on PharmaNet. DINs for Sterinova methadone are not benefits and will not be reimbursed by PharmaCare.

LIMITED COVERAGE DRUGS

The following product has been added as a Limited Coverage benefit under Fair PharmaCare and PharmaCare Plans B, C, F, and W:

COVERAGE EFFECTIVE	December 17, 2019		
DRUG NAME	brexpiprazole (Rexulti®)		
INDICATION	Schizophrenia or other psychosis (not dementia related)		
DIN	02461749	STRENGTH AND FORM	0.25 mg tablet
	02461757		0.5 mg tablet
	02461765		1 mg tablet
	02461773		2 mg tablet
	02461781		3 mg tablet
	02461803		4 mg tablet
PLAN G BENEFIT	Yes	PLAN P BENEFIT	No

NON-BENEFIT(S)

The following product has been reviewed and will not be listed as a PharmaCare benefit for the indication specified:

PRODUCT	DIN	STRENGTH/FORM	INDICATION
alirocumab (Praluent™)	02453754	75 mg/pre-filled syringe	Treatment of high-risk patients who have had prior cardiovascular (CV) events and require additional lowering of low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C)
	02453819	75 mg/pre-filled pen	
	02453762	150 mg/pre-filled syringe	
	02453835	150 mg/pre-filled pen	