the DBL report

**Issue #50, January 2009**

*An Official Accompaniment to the Alberta Health and Wellness Drug Benefit List (AHWDBL)*

*The Expert Committee on Drug Evaluation and Therapeutics (ECDET)*

*produced by Alberta Blue Cross*



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# *Highlights of New Products Added*

■ **ATACAND** (candesartan cilexetil) (AZE) **32 mg tablet**, a line extension of the currently listed Atacand product line, was recommended for addition to the *AHWDBL*. The manufacturer indicated that they had introduced this product as the dosing range lies within 4 mg to 32 mg daily. In addition, it was noted that the 32 mg product is priced at parity with the available 8 mg and 16 mg tablets. The Expert Committee considered the information provided and recommended that this product be listed as it offers a cost and therapeutic advantage.

■ **METROGEL** (metronidazole) (GAL) **1% topical gel** is a once daily formulation indicated for the treatment of inflammatory papules, pustules and erythema of rosacea. The Committee considered a resubmission for this product in which the manufacturer asserted that the listing of **Metrogel 1%** may offer savings to the drug program as it is priced at parity with Metrogel 0.75% gel, but is indicated for use only once daily (i.e., as opposed to the 0.75% gel that is dosed twice daily). Based on this information, as well as, additional clinical data provided, the Committee recommended that this product be granted an unrestricted listing on the *AHWDBL*.

■ **PMS-TOPIRAMATE** (topiramate) (PMS) **50 mg tablet** is a line extension of the currently listed PMS-Topiramate product line. The manufacturer indicated that this strength had been introduced to assist in dosage titration. In addition, it was noted that the availability of the 50 mg strength would be useful for the indication of migraine prophylaxis, which is usually dosed at 50 mg twice daily. The Committee recommended that this product be added as it offers a therapeutic advantage.

# *Highlights of Special Authorization Products Added*

■ **APO-CYCLOSPORINE** (cyclosporine) (APX) **100 mg/mL oral solution** was recommended for addition to the *AHWDBL* via special authorization. This product had been previously listed on the *AHWDBL* but was removed when the manufacturer discontinued the product. The Committee recommended that this product be listed via special authorization with criteria at parity with the innovator as it offers a cost advantage. Please refer to the *AHWDBL* for a detailed listing of the coverage criteria.

■ **RATIO-FENTANYL** (fentanyl) (RPH) **12 mcg/hour transdermal system** is a first entry interchangeable product that is priced approximately 30% less than the innovator. The Committee recommended that this product be listed via special authorization in an interchangeable grouping with the innovator, Duragesic (JOI). Please refer to the AHWDBL for a detailed listing of the coverage criteria.

# *Highlights of Products Not Added*

■ **CYMBALTA** (duloxetine hydrochloride) (LIL) **30 mg and 60 mg delayed-release capsules** were originally reviewed via the Common Drug Review (CDR) for the indications of symptomatic relief of major depressive disorder (MDD) and the management of neuropathic pain associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy (DPNP). The CDR had not recommended that provincial plans reimburse this product for the indication of MDD; therefore, the Expert Committee was asked to review only the indication of DPNP for potential coverage via the *AHWDBL*. Committee members noted that this product produced significant improvements in pain rating scales and quality of life measurements compared to placebo. However, it was noted that there was a lack of randomized controlled trials comparing **Cymbalta** to other currently available therapies. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that this product should not be added as it fails to offer a therapeutic advantage.