the DBL report

Issue #61, May 2011

An Official Accompaniment to the Alberta Health and Wellness Drug Benefit List (AHWDBL) produced by Alberta Blue Cross

The Expert Committee on Drug Evaluation and Therapeutics (ECDET)

In this issue:

Brief Summary of Drug Review Activities

The Expert Committee on Drug Evaluation and Therapeutics met on March 16, 2011. The Committee reviewed Manufacturer submissions for 4 Drug Products. The Committee also considered information for a number of supplementary assessments of the coverage status of 13 Drug Products.

In addition to Drug Products reviewed by the Expert Committee, 29 generic Drug Products underwent Expedited Review for listing on the *AHWDBL* effective April 1, 2011, and another 31 generic Drug Products underwent Expedited Review for listing effective May 1, 2011.

The following are highlights of recent changes to the *AHWDBL* and other topics of general interest. A complete list of changes, as well as the full *AHWDBL* may be accessed at https://www.ab.bluecross.ca/dbl/publications.html.

Highlights of New Products Added

■ **PMS-QUETIAPINE** (quetiapine fumarate) (PMS) **50 mg tablet** has been added to the *AHWDBL* as a line extension to other currently listed strengths. The Expert Committee indicated that **PMS-QUETIAPINE 50 mg tablet** provides a therapeutic advantage of not having to split an unscored 100 mg tablet and a decreased pill burden for patients who would otherwise require two 25 mg tablets for a 50 mg dose. In addition, **PMS-QUETIAPINE 50 mg** provides a cost advantage, based on savings over two 25 mg tablets.

Review of Benefit Status (ROBS) Process

(A version of this article originally appeared in Issue # 36, July 2005)

The Review of Benefit Status (ROBS) is a process by which the current *AHWDBL* Drug Products may be reviewed for continued value and appropriateness. In addition, Alberta Health and Wellness and/or the Expert Committee on Drug Evaluation and Therapeutics may at any time recommend that the benefit status of an individual product, class or category of Drug Products on the *AHWDBL* be reviewed.

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A complete list of changes, as well as the full AHWDBL may be accessed at https://www.ab.bluecross.ca/dbl/publications.html.
Please refer to the current AHWDBL for explanations of coverage, including a listing of coverage criteria (where applicable).*

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ROBS Process

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Developed in response to feedback from the Auditor General of Alberta, the ROBS process serves to assess the continued value of Drug Products after they have been added to the *AHWDBL*, thereby assisting with the sustainability of the government-sponsored drug programs.

As with the review of any Drug Product by the Committee, recommendations are made by considering the potential benefit to all patients covered by the government-sponsored drug programs. Following a ROBS review, the listing status of a product may remain unchanged, or could be revised or discontinued if one or more of the ROBS criteria, published in Section 1 of the *AHWDBL*, are met. If a change in benefit status is deemed to be warranted, Manufacturers of the affected Drug Products are notified and provided with an opportunity to make a submission to the Committee prior to a final recommendation being made. Other stakeholders, such as prescribers, are also often consulted for input before a final recommendation is issued. The Expert Committee is the advisory committee to the Minister of Health and Wellness on matters pertaining to the coverage of Drug Products on the *AHWDBL*.

Highlights of New Interchangeable (IC) Groupings

Addition of the following products to the *AHWDBL* has resulted in the creation of New IC Groupings, effective April 1, 2011:

- **RAN-VALSARTAN** (valsartan) (RAN) **80 mg & 160 mg tablets**
- **SANDOZ VALSARTAN** (SDZ) & **TEVA-VALSARTAN** (TEV) (valsartan) **80 mg, 160 mg & 320 mg tablets**
- **SANDOZ VALSARTAN HCT** (SDZ) & **TEVA-VALSARTAN/HCTZ** (TEV) (valsartan/hydrochlorothiazide) **80 mg/12.5 mg, 160 mg/12.5 mg, 160 mg/25 mg, 320 mg/12.5 mg & 320 mg/25 mg tablets**

Addition of the following products to the *AHWDBL* has resulted in the creation of New IC Groupings, effective May 1, 2011:

- **PMS-IRBESARTAN** (PMS), **RATIO-IRBESARTAN** (RPH), **SANDOZ IRBESARTAN** (SDZ) & **TEVA-IRBESARTAN** (TEV) (irbesartan) **75 mg, 150 mg & 300 mg tablets**
- **PMS-IRBESARTAN-HCTZ** (PMS), **RATIO-IRBESARTAN HCTZ** (RPH), **SANDOZ IRBESARTAN HCT** (SDZ) & **TEVA-IRBESARTAN/HCTZ** (TEV) (irbesartan/hydrochlorothiazide) **150/12.5 mg, 300/12.5 mg & 300/25 mg tablets**
- **PMS-RAMIPRIL-HCTZ** (ramipril/hydrochlorothiazide) (PMS) **2.5mg/12.5 mg, 5 mg/12.5 mg & 5 mg/25 mg tablets**

Products Originally Reviewed via the Common Drug Review (CDR)

■ **FINACEA** (azelaic acid) (BAI) **15% topical gel** was reviewed via the CDR process. In keeping with the recommendations from the CDR, this product has been added to the *AHWDBL* as a Regular Benefit.

■ In keeping with recommendations from the CDR, the following products have not been added to the *AHWDBL*:

- **EFFIENT** (prasugrel hydrochloride) (LIL) **10 mg tablet**
- **ILARIS** (canakinumab) (NOV) **150 mg/vial powder for solution**
- **KUVAN** (sapropterin dihydrochloride) (BMI) **100 mg tablet**

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