Effective **September 1, 2020**, the Alberta Biosimilars Initiative will be updated with the following changes that will affect adult members on Alberta government-sponsored drug plans.

1. Addition of rituximab biosimilars

For the indication of rheumatoid arthritis

Effective September 1, 2020, Riximyo and Ruxience, , manufactured by Sandoz Canada Inc. and Pfizer Canada respectively, will be listed alongside other rituximab biosimilar options for all new Special Authorization requests for rituximab for rheumatoid arthritis and for those patients who are required to switch to a biosimilar version. Effective June 1, 2020, all new Special Authorization requests for rituximab for rheumatoid arthritis will be assessed for a biosimilar version and existing patients currently taking Rituxan for this indication are required to switch to a biosimilar version by January 15, 2021 in order to maintain coverage for this molecule through their Alberta government-sponsored drug plan.

For the indication of granulomatosis with polyangiitis (GPA) and microscopic polyangiitis (MPA)

Effective September 1, 2020, all Special Authorization requests for new rituximab starts for the treatment of GPA and MPA will be assessed for coverage with biosimilar Ruxience according to the existing Special Authorization criteria for rituximab. Patients currently taking Rituxan for the indication of MPA or GPA will be required to switch to the biosimilar version by March 1, 2021 in order to maintain coverage for this molecule through their Alberta government-sponsored drug plan.

2. Addition of pegfilgrastim biosimilar

Effective September 1, 2020, Ziextenzo, manufactured by Sandoz Canada Inc., will be listed on the ADBL alongside other pegfilgrastim biosimilar options for all new Special Authorization requests and for those patients who are required to switch to a biosimilar version. Effective December 12, 2019, all new Special Authorization requests for pegfilgrastim will be assessed for a biosimilar version and existing patients currently taking Neulasta for this indication are required to switch to a biosimilar version by January 15, 2021 in order to maintain coverage for this molecule through their Alberta government-sponsored drug plan.

For the most current Special Authorization criteria, please visit the Interactive Drug Benefit List and search the drug name. Please visit Alberta Health for a current list of biologics, their biosimilar equivalents and specific indications affected by this policy.