

Drug product shortage information

Pharmacy teams have provided feedback and suggestions to Alberta Blue Cross and Alberta Health on how to improve drug product shortage processes, and we have implemented several enhancements to make the process better. Alberta Blue Cross recognizes the ongoing challenges for pharmacy teams and their patients caused by drug product shortages, and we thank you for your work in supporting your patients and communities. Drug shortages can result from various supply and demand causes, including manufacturing issues, distribution issues, importation issues and product discontinuations.

Assessing a drug shortage

The following information is being provided to pharmacy teams for awareness on the process for how drug shortages are investigated and addressed by Alberta Blue Cross. Alberta Blue Cross works on an ongoing basis to support pharmacy teams in providing solutions to drug shortages and communicates information to pharmacies through Benefacts and the Critical Supply Product List.

When a shortage is reported by a pharmacy team member to the Alberta Blue Cross Provider Relations Contact Centre, Alberta Blue Cross will confirm with the appropriate manufacturer(s) and wholesaler the availability of a specific drug product and/or the availability of an entire Interchangeable Grouping, if applicable. In the event a shortage is confirmed, Alberta Blue Cross will proceed with 1 or more of the following actions to address the shortage in an effort to mitigate its impact on pharmacies and members of a government sponsored drug program:

1. Approve coverage for an alternative drug product through the following decision-making process:
 - a. If all generic options in an Interchangeable Grouping (IC) are unavailable, the Least Cost Alternative (LCA and/or Maximum Allowable Cost (MAC)) pricing may be suspended and coverage for the higher priced medication (e.g., the brand drug) in the IC Grouping will be reimbursed.
 - Drug product groupings where the LCA and/or MAC price policy have been suspended appear with a LCA and/or MAC price of 0.0000 on the *interactive Drug Benefit List (iDBL)* ab.bluecross.ca/dbl/idbl_main1.php
 - b. If all generic options in an IC Grouping including the brand drug are unavailable, a temporary benefit may be added.
 - c. If a temporary benefit is not an option, a compounded drug benefit may be made eligible.
2. Alberta Blue Cross continues to monitor drug product supply issues and update the Critical Supply List on an ongoing basis. It is recommended that products within the list be dispensed at a 30-day supply. The list can be found at ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-resources.php.
 - a. As a reminder, the Critical Supply Product List consists of
 - products identified by Health Canada as Tier 3 drug shortages,
 - products in critical supply as verified by wholesalers or drug manufacturers,
 - temporary benefits eligible under government-sponsored drug programs due to shortage, and
 - products reported by pharmacies that have been investigated, and confirmed for having supply issues.

continued next page

PHARMACY BENEFACT

continued from previous page

- This includes imported drug products approved by Health Canada and added as a temporary benefit for government-sponsored drug programs.

For drug products listed on the *Alberta Drug Benefit List (ADBL)*, the online *iDBL* at ab.bluecross.ca/dbl/idbl_main1.php is a near real-time application, and as such, contains the most up-to-date information for LCA and MAC price policy suspensions. Please remember to refer to the ADBL to determine if there are other eligible products that could be deemed an appropriate therapeutic alternative and to check the federal Drug Shortages Database before contacting Alberta Blue Cross to investigate further.

Drug shortage resolutions

When a previously unavailable drug product grouping is confirmed to have become available (no longer in a shortage situation), Alberta Blue Cross will reapply the generic price policy and/or remove any temporary benefit(s) from government-sponsored drug programs where appropriate.

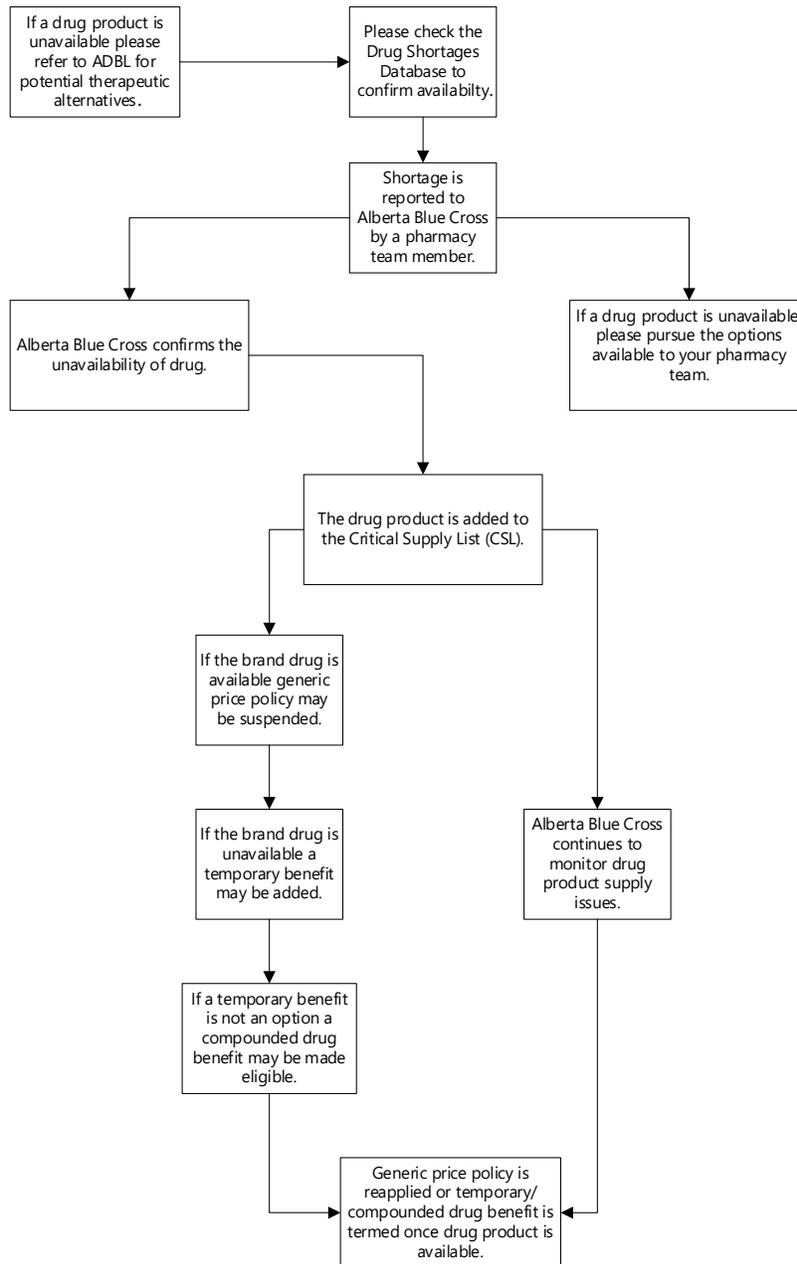
Please note there is a 30-day transition provided when temporary benefits are removed and/or generic price policies are reapplied when the shortage duration has been confirmed as occurring for greater than 30 days. If the shortage is rectified in 30 days or less, no transition period is provided.

Please note, Pharmacy Benefacts are issued to Alberta pharmacies to advise of the addition and removal of temporary benefits, as well as LCA/MAC pricing reapplications. All Pharmacy Benefacts are available for reference on the Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy provider page at ab.bluecross.ca/provider/type/pharmacy/home.php.

continued next page

PHARMACY BENEFACT

continued from previous page



For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area)

403-294-4041 (Calgary and area)

1-800-361-9632 (toll free)

FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area)

FAX 1-877-305-9911 (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

Visit ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php

