PHARMACY BENEFACT

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A BULLETIN FOR PHARMACY SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM ALBERTA BLUE CROSS®

The Government of Northwest Territories makes additions to the Biosimilars Initiative

The Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) launched the Biosimilars Initiative in December 2021.

The Biosimilars Initiative is an evidence-informed strategy to optimize public resources to get the best value for treatments and improve access to medications for patients. Increasing the uptake of biosimilar medicines will contribute to the sustainability of the public drug plans.

The below products are being added to the Biosimilar Initiative. Effective December 1, 2025, all new patients will be required to use a biosimilar version of the affected products. The GNWT will no longer provide coverage for new patients for the originator brand drugs listed in the second column of the table below.

Patients currently on an affected product must transition to its biosimilar version before June 1, 2026, in order to maintain coverage for the molecule through their GNWT Extended Health Benefits. All special authorization approvals that are in place for the originator biologic drug will automatically be applied to its biosimilar version(s).

During the transition period from December 1, 2025, to June 1, 2026, both the originator biologic drug and biosimilar versions of the affected drugs will be covered for patients on these affected products, in order to allow prescribers and patients time to discuss treatment options and to develop a plan for switching.

Affected products as of December 1, 2025

Active ingredient	Originator biologic product	Biosimilar product
Aflibercept	Eylea®	Yesafili® Aflivu®
Omalizumab	Xolair®	Omlyclo®

Future off-patent biosimilar originators will continue to be added following Health Canada approval of a biosimilar brand alternative and GNWT's review of manufacturers' submissions.

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Exceptions

If there is a medical reason why a patient cannot switch to the biosimilar alternative, the prescriber can submit a request for exceptional coverage to Alberta Blue Cross®. In the request, the prescriber must clearly identify why the patient is unable to switch and provide evidence that all biosimilar drug products have been tried prior to the request being made. If a trial has been attempted and halted, the trial must be well documented and a rationale for halting use of the biosimilar therapy must be included in a request for exception. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Canada Post Strike

Due to the ongoing Canada Post strike, letters sent to affected patients regarding these upcoming changes may be delayed. We ask your assistance in identifying and discussing these upcoming changes with your affected patients.

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**

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