

Pharmacy Benefact

A BULLETIN FOR PHARMACY SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM ALBERTA BLUE CROSS

Number 822 • December 2019

Important reminder: Alberta Health’s change to coverage for select angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEIs), HMG-COA reductase inhibitors (statins) and calcium-channel blocking agents (CCBs) under Alberta government sponsored programs

As previously communicated in Benefact 818, November 2019, effective December 12, 2019, Alberta government sponsored drug programs will only pay up to the Maximum Allowable Cost (MAC) price for each of the following groupings:

MAC category	Lower Cost Products (not affected by MAC pricing)	Higher Cost Products (affected by MAC pricing)
ACEIs single entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramipril • Lisinopril 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benazepril • Captopril • Cilazapril • Enalapril • Fosinopril • Perindopril • Quinapril • Trandolapril
ACEIs combination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisinopril with hydrochlorothiazide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cilazapril with hydrochlorothiazide • Enalapril with hydrochlorothiazide • Perindopril with indapamide • Quinapril with hydrochlorothiazide • Ramipril with hydrochlorothiazide
Dihydropyridine CCBs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amlodipine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felodipine • Nifedipine
HMG CoA reductase inhibitors (statins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosuvastatin • Atorvastatin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluvastatin • Lovastatin • Pravastatin • Simvastatin

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Note: some Drug Products affected by MAC pricing may have individual strengths where the Least Cost Alternative (LCA) price is less than the MAC price. In these cases, the product will continue to be covered up to the LCA price (e.g. the LCA price for perindopril 2 mg is lower than the established ACEI MAC price, therefore it will be fully reimbursed at the LCA price).

Pharmacists may choose to switch patients to the Lower Cost Products and submit for an adaptation fee; please refer to Benefact 446, April 2014 for specific details about adaptation.

Special authorization may be considered when a plan member has experienced a significant allergic reaction or documented untoward therapeutic effect with a Drug Product not affected by MAC pricing. Special authorizations will also be considered for the following patient populations on ACEI therapy (single and combination): pediatric patients, heart failure patients with twice a day dosing, and breast-feeding patients.

Pediatric patients presently enrolled in a government sponsored program, and currently taking an ACEI product will be exempt from MAC pricing. Claims for these patients will continue to pay at current LCA pricing.

- New pediatric patients to a government sponsored program taking an ACEI will need to have their health care provider submit the appropriate authorization form to Alberta Blue Cross for exception from MAC pricing.
- Pediatric patients presently enrolled in a government sponsored program who have been prescribed an ACEI as of November 12 or later will need to have their health care provider provide submit the appropriate authorization form to Alberta Blue Cross for exception from MAC pricing.

For further details please refer to Benefact 818 and www.ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-resources.php.

To assist with communicating this change to patients, we have attached a patient information sheet.

When you have questions:

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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Patient information

Important change to drug coverage

Effective November 12, 2019, Alberta government coverage for three categories of drugs will change. This change only applies to patients on Alberta government sponsored drug plans:

- Non-Group Coverage (Group 1)
- Coverage for Seniors (Group 66)
- Palliative Coverage (Group 20514, Please note: Client may have Group 1 or Group 66 coverage)
- Child and Family Services (Group 20403)
- Alberta Child Health Benefit (Group 20400)
- Children and Youth Services (Group 19824)
- Income Support (Group 19823)
- Learners Program (Group 22128)
- Alberta Human Services (AISH) (Group 19823)
- Alberta Adult Health Benefit (AAHB) (Group 23609)

Drugs affected

The drugs affected include the following:

- Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors– which treat congestive heart failure and hypertension;
- Calcium channel blockers – which treat angina and hypertension; and
- Statins (also known as HMG CoA reductase inhibitors) – which treat cholesterol.

How coverage is changing

Government will introduce a limit on how much it will pay for drugs in these categories. Government will only reimburse the designated lowest cost drug or drugs in each category, an approach called maximum allowable cost pricing.

In some categories, more than one option will be reimbursed to ensure approved uses of these drugs remain accessible.

Switching to another medication

Evidence shows that drugs within each category are similar in use, safety and effectiveness. Most patients can switch to another drug in the same category safely and without affecting their health.

If you switch to the lower cost drug, your co-payments may decrease.

A one-month transition period, ending December 11, 2019, will be provided. This transition period allows time to discuss the change with your health care provider and adjust to the lower cost drug, if you decide to switch.

Using your current medication

If you decide to continue using your current medication and it costs more than the designated lowest cost drug, you will pay the cost difference.

More information

Please speak with your health care provider if you have questions about this change.

You may also contact Alberta Blue Cross at 1-800-661-6995.