

Reminder: Lantus delisted on government-sponsored drug plans

On December 12, 2019, the Alberta government introduced the Alberta Biosimilar Initiative, refer to Benefact 826, December 2019 and Benefact 927, January 2021. This communication is to remind you that as of January 15, 2021, Lantus was delisted from the government-sponsored drug plans. Claims for delisted products are accepted for 30 days following the delist-date to allow pharmacies to adjust inventory. This transition is coming to an end on February 14, 2021.

Switching to a biosimilar

Patients currently claiming insulin glargine must switch to its biosimilar version Basaglar in order to maintain coverage for the molecule through their Alberta government-sponsored drug plan. Patients claiming insulin glargine received a letter in October 2020 reminding them of this change in coverage and steps to follow that would support them in working with their health care provider to switch to the biosimilar.

Pharmacists who alter an insulin order from Lantus to Basaglar are reminded of the eligibility for claims under the Compensation Plan for Pharmacy Services as **Assessment for an Adaptation of a Prescription or Alteration of an Insulin Order** (assessment code 0071111/0081111, SSC - H).

Health care professionals play a vital role in switching to a biosimilar by serving as a trusted source for information, coordinating care and managing patient expectations. A patient information handout to support these interactions is available on the Alberta Blue Cross website at ab.bluecross.ca/pdfs/Patient-Info-Biosimilars.pdf.

Exceptions

Please note, if one of these exceptions apply to your patients, they will continue to be eligible for Lantus.

- Pregnant patients: a Biosimilar Initiative Exception Request form must be submitted. Requests for Lantus may be submitted by pharmacists with additional prescribing authorization. Alberta Blue Cross will only consider approval based on pregnancy and approval will be granted until six months past the delivery due date. Those that are trying to conceive will not be approved.
- Pediatric patients: existing Lantus pediatric patients (under the age of 18 years) are exempt from switching. No application is required.
- Those who have been approved for a biologic exception through special authorization due to a medical reason. If there is a medical reason why a patient cannot switch to the biosimilar, the prescriber can submit a request for exceptional coverage to Alberta Blue Cross. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

For the most current special authorization criteria, please visit the **Interactive Drug Benefit List** at idbl.ab.bluecross.ca/idbl/load.do and search the drug name. Please visit **Alberta Health** online at alberta.ca/biosimilar-drugs.aspx for a current list of biologics, their biosimilar equivalents and specific indications affected by this policy. As a reminder, supporting materials for patients and health care providers regarding the Alberta Biosimilar Initiative are available on the Alberta Blue Cross website at ab.bluecross.ca/pdfs/Biosimilars-Resources-for-Patients.pdf.

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Quarterly update regarding the Authorized Adjustment

The Alberta government, the Alberta Pharmacists' Association and Alberta Blue Cross continue working collaboratively to monitor pharmacy compensation expenditures and trends for drug benefit fees and pharmacy services. As previously communicated in Benefact 865, a provision exists to enable an Authorized Adjustment mechanism, through a consultative process, should expenditures trend towards exceeding established budget targets.

With the completion of the third fiscal quarter (October 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020), expenditures remain within budget targets, and as a result, there was no need to initiate consultations on the Authorized Adjustment.

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

