# Alberta Biosimilar Initiative

## Reminder for prescribers – switching deadline of January 15, 2021

Under the Alberta Biosimilar Initiative, patients currently taking one of the following originator biologic drugs for the specified indications must switch to the biosimilar version of their molecule **before January 15, 2021,** in order to maintain coverage of that molecule through the Alberta government-sponsored drug plans.

- Remicade, Enbrel (all indications except Plaque Psoriasis and Pediatric Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis), Lantus, Neupogen, Neulasta, Copaxone and Rituxan (for the indication of Rheumatoid Arthritis). (Note: the switch deadline for Rituxan for the indications of granulomatosis with polyangiitis (GPA) and microscopic polyangiitis (MPA) is March 1, 2021)

Unless an exception has been granted for the originator biologic, **as of January 15, 2021, patients will only be provided coverage for the biosimilar version of the drugs noted above through Alberta's government-sponsored drug plans.**

**Prescribers are encouraged to start the process for switching as early as possible** to ensure there is sufficient time to have discussions with your patient and for your patient to enroll in a new patient support program or book an appointment with the infusion clinic, if needed.

At this time, patients are being provided with a letter reminding them of the January 15, 2021 deadline and with the following information based on their individual circumstances:

- If you have not yet been contacted by your physician about switching to a biosimilar, please contact your physician to discuss the biosimilar and develop a plan for switching.

- If you have a new prescription for a biosimilar but have not yet started the new medication, please continue working with the patient support program or your pharmacy to start your biosimilar.

- If you have a new prescription for a biosimilar administered intravenously (IV), please contact the patient support program to arrange your infusion. If you have an appointment scheduled with an infusion clinic, please attend your appointment as scheduled or as otherwise instructed by the clinic.

- If you have not yet switched to a biosimilar medication but have scheduled an appointment with your physician, please continue taking your biologic medication until meeting with your physician. Please attend your appointment as scheduled or as otherwise instructed by your physician.

### Patients do not require a new Special Authorization

During the switching period from December 12, 2019 to January 15, 2021, both the originator biologic drug and its biosimilar version will be covered under a patient's existing Special Authorization approval. As of January 15, 2021, the Special Authorization will cover the biosimilar only. Special Authorization approvals that term between December 12, 2019 and December 12, 2020 have also been extended by 12 months to reduce Special Authorization associated workload.

**Report of Affected Patients Available**

If you would like a report to assist you with identifying your affected patients, please contact Alberta Blue Cross. The report will identify patients who have a current special authorization for one of the affected products or have filled a prescription for the medication in the last six months.

**If you have questions regarding the Biosimilar Initiative please visit the Alberta Blue Cross health care professionals resource page or contact us at 1-866-998-8480.**