

COVID-19 Oral Antiviral Paxlovid™ —REMINDER

As previously communicated in Benefact #1178 issued on May 24, 2024, Paxlovid was listed on the *Alberta Drug Benefit List (ADBL)* as a Restricted Benefit/Special Authorization for members of a government-sponsored drug plan that meet the eligibility criteria. For clarity, the patients must meet the following two conditions:

- are adults (age 18 years or older) with mild-to-moderate coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) who have a positive Rapid Antigen or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, and are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19; AND
- are moderately to severely immunosuppressed

Treatment with Paxlovid should be initiated as soon as possible after a diagnosis of COVID-19 has been made, and within five days of symptom onset. Note, examples of moderate to severe immunosuppression include the following:

- Severe immunosuppression, such as
 - recipient of solid organ transplant
 - treatment for a malignant hematologic condition
 - bone marrow-, stem cell transplant-, or transplant-related immunosuppressant use
 - receipt of an anti-CD20 drugs or B-cell depleting drugs (such as rituximab) in the past two years
 - severe primary immunodeficiencies
- Moderate immunosuppression, such as
 - treatment for cancer, including solid tumors
 - treatment with significantly immunosuppressing drugs (e.g., a biologic in the past three months, oral immune-suppressing medication in the past months, oral steroid [20 mg/day of prednisone equivalent taken on an ongoing basis] in the past month or immune-suppressing infusion or injection in the past 3 months)
 - advanced HIV infection (treated or untreated)
 - moderate primary immunodeficiencies
 - renal conditions (i.e., hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, glomerulonephritis and dispensing of a steroid, eGFR < 15 mL/min/1.73 m²)

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Claims adjudication

The Restricted Benefit coverage functionality of Paxlovid™ provides coverage **without** requiring special authorization when the Alberta Blue Cross PRIDERT adjudication system identifies that a member has claimed for therapies used to treat conditions associated with immunosuppression. Should the adjudication system identify one of these therapies, the claim will be accepted automatically. The following drug classes are considered under the criteria:

- calcineurin inhibitors (e.g., Tacrolimus, Cyclosporine)
- antimetabolites (e.g., Mycophenolate mofetil, Azathioprine, methotrexate)
- mTOR inhibitors (e.g., Sirolimus, Everolimus)
- corticosteroids* (e.g., Prednisone, Methylprednisolone)
- cancer drugs
- anti-CD20 agents
- B-cell depleting agents (such as rituximab)
- biologics (not including insulin)
- JAK Inhibitors
- Antiretroviral Therapy
- Erythropoietin Receptor Agonists
- drugs specific to renal conditions (e.g., sevelamer, cinacalcet, sucroferric oxyhydroxide, lanthanum carbonate)

*not including inhaled corticosteroids

In cases where prior history of these medications is not available within the Alberta Blue Cross PRIDE^{RT} adjudication system (e.g., Oncology, HIV) the claim may reject with the following response codes:

EG—No Record of First Line Therapy

CP—Eligible for Special Authorization

Intervention code

When the pharmacy provider has supporting documentation of the patient meeting the above-noted criteria, coverage may be provided when the following intervention code is used:

NB—valid claim—validation on file

As a reminder, Special Authorization is available for Paxlovid™ if the Restricted Benefit pathway is not appropriate (e.g., pharmacist unable to enter intervention codes for claim, patient is being treated for an immunosuppressive condition that the prescriber considers is moderate to severe but not outlined within the special authorization criteria). **Given the time sensitive nature of Paxlovid, Alberta Blue Cross will endeavor to assess Paxlovid™ Special Authorization requests in an urgent manner.**

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

