

Drug Review

Recently Introduced Products

Volume V, Issue 7

Drug Name	Indication	Potential Plan Impact
Periostat	Treatment of periodontitis	\$
Linessa	Prevention of contraception	\$
Uromax CR	Treatment of overactive bladder	\$
Vesicare	Treatment of overactive bladder	\$
	\$ Little increase estimated in drug plan expenditure	
	\$\$ Drug plan expenditure estimated to be somewhat increased	
	\$\$\$ Potential for large increase in drug plan expenditure	

Rituxan IV – A cancer drug with a new indication for Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rituxan IV is a cancer drug used for non-Hodgkins lymphoma. It is currently not covered under ClaimSecure's prescription plan because it is administered in an in-patient hospital setting. Rituxan has now been approved for moderate to severe active Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA). It is reserved for patients who have experienced an inadequate response or intolerance to one or more tumour necrosis factor inhibitor "anti-TNF therapies" e.g. Enbrel, Humira or Remicade.

RA is a chronic, progressive, autoimmune disease. Initial treatment with Disease-Modifying Antirheumatic Drugs (DMARDs), including methotrexate (MTX), is the standard of care for patients to limit early joint damage and functional loss. However, because of the limited effectiveness of DMARDs, biological agents (anti-TNFs) for RA were developed.

RA affects approximately 1% of the population¹. One course of treatment with Rituxan costs approximately \$9000 (2000mg by IV infusion in an out-patient setting). Patients can be treated every 4 to 6 months i.e. two to three times in a year. The annual cost of two to three courses of Rituxan is \$18,000 to \$27,000.

Although anti-TNFs have revolutionized the treatment of patients with chronic and progressive RA, clinical data and clinical experience show that one quarter of patients do not respond². Rituxan appears to be effective in those patients who have not adequately responded to anti-TNF therapy.

Rituxan is covered under Cancer Care or hospital budgets for non-Hodgkins lymphoma only, not for RA. For ClaimSecure's **Managed Formularies**, it will be included in the Special Authorization program for the indication of RA in patients who have experienced an inadequate response or intolerance to one or more anti-TNF therapies.

For ClaimSecure's open formularies, Rituxan will remain excluded for both indications.

Should you wish to cover Rituxan for RA under Special Authorization or if you require additional information about Rituxan, please contact Shellina Sevany in ClaimSecure's Clinical Services Department at (905) 949-3025 or 1-888-479-7587 ext.3025.

Recommendation: Special Authorization

ClaimSecure reserves the right to amend in part or in its entirety stated special authorization clinical guidelines

References:

1. Lawrence RC, Helmick CG, Arnett FC, et al. Estimates of the prevalence of arthritis and selected musculoskeletal disorders in the United States. *Arthritis Rheum* 1998;41:778-99.
2. Feltelius N, Fored CM, Blomqvist P, et al. Results from a nationwide postmarketing cohort study of patients in Sweden treated with etanercept. *Ann Rheum Dis* 2005;64:246-52

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