

Drug Review

Recently Introduced Products

Volume VI, Issue 3

Drug Name	Indication	Potential Plan Impact
Biphentin CR 80mg	Treatment of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	\$
Fosrenol	Phosphate binder for treatment of end-stage renal disease (ESRD)	\$
Infergen 0.03mg/mL	Treatment of chronic hepatitis C	\$\$
Somatuline Autogel	Treatment of acromegaly (overproduction of growth hormone)	\$\$
	\$ Little increase estimated in drug plan expenditure	
	\$\$ Drug plan expenditure estimated to be somewhat increased	
	\$\$\$ Potential for large increase in drug plan expenditure	

Champix® – “Butting” Out For Good

Champix® is the newest oral smoking cessation drug available in Canada. Other smoking cessation agents include Zyban® (sustained release bupropion) and nicotine replacement products such as nicotine gum and patches. Although Champix is not a nicotine replacement product, it works by specifically targeting nicotinic receptors in the brain to reduce cravings and withdrawals. In addition, it blocks the rewarding effects of smoking¹.

After smoke inhalation, it takes only 10 seconds for nicotine to reach the brain. Nicotine causes chemical changes in the brain, resulting in a powerful addiction over time because it is a “reinforcing” drug i.e. smokers desire the nicotine regardless of the damaging effects. Withdrawal symptoms are severe and most smokers cannot quit on their first attempt because of withdrawal symptoms². Oral smoking cessation drugs like Champix® and Zyban® reduce these cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

Champix® is dosed as 0.5mg once daily for the first 3 days then increased to 0.5mg twice daily for days 4-7 and finally, the dose is increased to 1.0mg twice daily for day 8 and onward. A second 12 week course may be given, if necessary. A 12-week course of Champix® costs approximately \$278.00 (or \$3.31 per day) versus a 12 week course of Zyban® which costs approximately \$148.00 (or \$1.76 per day).

If a ClaimSecure client has opted to cover smoking cessation agents, it is recommended that Champix also be included in this coverage. In addition, since Champix® and Zyban® are equally effective, it is recommended that any maximums/limits placed on smoking cessation agents remain as they are.

If you require additional information about Champix®, please contact Shellina Sevany, Clinical Pharmacist, Clinical Services Department, at (905) 949-3025 or 1-888-479-7587 ext.3025.

Recommendation: Include/Exclude (depending on group plan design)

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

References:

1. Reus VI, Obach RS, Coe JW, Faessel H, et al. Varenicline: New treatment with efficacy in smoking cessation. *Drugs Today (Barc)*. 2007 Feb; 43(2):65-75.
2. Health Canada website. Addiction. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/nl-vs/lobac-tabac/body-corps/nicotine/addiction-dependance/index_e.html. Accessed March 18, 2006.

