



Recently Introduced Products

Drug Name	Indication	Potential Impact	Expected Avg. Annual Cost
Saphris	For the treatment of schizophrenia and the acute treatment of manic or mixed episodes associated with bipolar I disorder	\$	\$1,380.00

\$: Est. drug plan expenditure increase of <1%* \$\$: Est. drug plan expenditure increase of 1-5%* \$\$\$: Est. drug plan expenditure increase of >5%*

Benlysta® - The use of a biologic as a new treatment option for lupus

Lupus is the common name for Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), an autoimmune disease that affects multiple organs (skin, joints, kidneys etc).¹ It is a disease of flares and remissions and is commonly associated with symptoms of fatigue, pain, sleep disturbances, anxiety and depression. SLE primarily affects women of childbearing age and significantly reduces their ability to work. The prevalence is 44.7 cases per 100,000 and women account for 90% of cases.²

Currently, SLE is an incurable disease. The goal of treatment is to control disease activity and prevent organ damage. Standard therapy includes corticosteroids and hydroxychloroquine. Benlysta® is used in combination with standard therapy to reduce disease activity and improve the quality of life of patients with active SLE. It is the first new treatment for SLE approved by Health Canada in over 50 years. It is also a new drug introduced to the class of biologics and provides a unique alternative to reduce symptoms and prevent organ damage. Benlysta® binds to and limits the activity of BLYS, a protein found in high levels in the blood of patients with active lupus. Excess levels of this protein interfere with the normal functioning of B cells (i.e. white blood cells) which leads to the organ damage observed in lupus.

Benlysta® is administered via a one hour intravenous infusion. The usual dose is 10mg per kg of body weight infused at 2-week intervals for the first three doses and at 4-week intervals thereafter. Benlysta® is priced at \$277.20 for 120mg (5ml vial) and \$924.00 for 400mg (20ml vial). The annual cost for an average 75kg patient is \$26,334 for the first year, followed by \$22,822 for each subsequent year. This represents a significant increase in the treatment cost for lupus compared to the current standard therapies. The approximate annual cost of hydroxychloroquine is \$191 and prednisone is \$44 - \$63.

Due to the significant cost associated with this medication and to ensure it is used in appropriate clinical settings, Benlysta® will be placed under Special Authorization for ClaimSecure groups that subscribe to the Managed Formulary, Specialty Drug, and Stop Loss Programs. The use of this biologic drug will be reserved for patients with active SLE that have had an inadequate response to standard therapy. The Special Authorization program will ensure that plan members have tried and failed corticosteroids and hydroxychloroquine. In addition, Special Authorization will allow coordination of benefits with available provincial drug plans. ClaimSecure will fully cover Benlysta® for existing Open Drug Formularies.

If you require additional information about Benlysta®, please contact Lavina Viegas, Clinical Pharmacist, Clinical Services Department, at (905) 949-3031 or 1-888-479-7587 ext. 3031.

Recommendation: Special Authorization

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

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References:

1. Systemic Lupus Erythematosus. PubMed Health. Available at : <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001471/>
2. Benlysta® Private Payer Submission. GlaxoSmithKline Inc. August, 2011.

* Based on the Financial Impact Analysis per 100 000 lives covered
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