

January 23, 2023

Dear Health Care Providers:

RE: Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative Update

The Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative was announced on October 20, 2022. See Formulary Bulletin #221 for more details:

<https://formulary.drugplan.ehealthsask.ca/Bulletins/Bulletin-0221-Oct-2022.pdf>.

Please refer to the following clarifications and resources to support health care providers and patients through this change. Feel free to share this information with your colleagues who may be helping patients transition to biosimilars.

Reminders:

- A new Exception Drug Status (EDS) application is not required for patients to start using a biosimilar.
- Where applicable, EDS coverage for the listed biosimilars has been added for patients who have current EDS coverage for an affected reference biologic. EDS coverage for the reference biologic will be terminated on April 30, 2023.
- Biosimilars are not listed as interchangeable with the reference biologic on the Saskatchewan Formulary. They cannot be substituted at the pharmacy level.
- Prescriptions must clearly indicate the biosimilar brand to be dispensed by the pharmacy.

Insulin Coverage Updates:

- **Humalog® (insulin lispro):** the transition for Humalog® is paused until further notice, until supply of the biosimilar (Admelog®) has stabilized and anticipated demand for Saskatchewan can be met.
- **NovoRapid® (insulin aspart):** coverage of NovoRapid® will continue to be available for patients who use insulin pumps while the biosimilar(s) undergo insulin pump certification.
- **Vial formats of Lantus® (insulin glargine) and NovoRapid® (insulin aspart):** Lantus® and NovoRapid® vials will remain covered at this time, until biosimilar(s) in a vial format are listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary.

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- See Formulary Bulletin #224 for more details:
<https://formulary.drugplan.ehealthsask.ca/Bulletins/Bulletin-0224-Dec-2022.pdf>.

Exemptions and Extensions:

- The Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative includes a provision for exemptions to the policy where patients must remain on the reference biologic for medical reasons.
- An Exemption Request Form is now available and can be found in the “Prescriber Forms” section of our webpage:
www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/prescription-drug-plans-and-health-coverage/extended-benefits-and-drug-plan/biosimilars.
- Prescribers can contact sk.biosimilars@health.gov.sk.ca or call 1-800-667-2549 (option #3) if they have questions related to the transition timeline.

Patient Notification:

- The Saskatchewan Drug Plan will be sending a letter to affected patients notifying them of the Biosimilars Initiative policy and resulting EDS coverage updates using a phased approach.
- Beginning the week of January 3, 2023, letters were mailed to affected patients using the following reference biologic drugs:
 - Humira® (adalimumab)
 - Lovenox® (enoxaparin)
 - Enbrel® (etanercept)
 - Neupogen® (filgrastim)*
 - Copaxone® (glatiramer)
 - Remicade® (infliximab)
 - Rituxan® (rituximab)

**No letters were mailed for Neupogen® (filgrastim) as there are no affected patients.*
- The letters include an information sheet on biosimilars and refer patients to other resources.
- The letters direct patients to do the following before April 30, 2023:
 - Continue using their reference biologic according to the prescriber’s instructions.
 - Follow up with the health care provider who prescribes their reference biologic at their next scheduled appointment, or contact their prescriber’s office if they do not have an appointment booked before April 30, 2023.
 - Get a new prescription for a biosimilar version of their medication.

- Discuss their questions about biosimilars with their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.
- Prescribers will be informed when letters are mailed to affected patients using NovoRapid® (insulin aspart), Lantus® (insulin glargine), and Humalog® (insulin lispro).

Please do not hesitate to contact us about the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative at sk.biosimilars@health.gov.sk.ca, or 1-800-667-2549 (306-787-8744 in Regina), option #3.

Additional information and resources on biosimilars and the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative are available for patients and health care providers at:

www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/prescription-drug-plans-and-health-coverage/extended-benefits-and-drug-plan/biosimilars.

Drug Plan and Extended Benefits