Ministry of Health
Drug Plan and Extended Benefits
2nd Floor, 3475 Albert Street
Regina, Canada S4S 6X6

January 26, 2026

RE: Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative Phase 2 -
EDS Coverage and Patient Notification Update

Dear Health Care Providers:

As you may be aware, the second phase of the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative launches on February 1, 2026. Notification was provided to relevant regulatory bodies, professional associations, and other stakeholders in a letter dated November 17, 2025. The letter is posted at www.saskatchewan.ca/biosimilars under section 7, "Resources and Studies."

The second phase of the Biosimilars Initiative includes four drugs listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary: **denosumab (Prolia®), omalizumab (Xolair®), tocilizumab (Actemra®),** and **ustekinumab (Stelara®)** (see Formulary Bulletin #261 at https://formulary.drugplan.ehealthsask.ca/BulletinsInfo for more information).

Effective **December 1, 2025**, **patients who are newly starting an affected biologic medication (i.e., patients without previous Exception Drug Status [EDS] approval for the reference biologic)** are only eligible for coverage of a listed biosimilar version.

Beginning **February 1, 2026, patients currently using an affected reference biologic medication** will need to use a listed biosimilar version **by the end of the transition period(s)** to maintain Saskatchewan Drug Plan coverage of their treatment. The end of the transition period is:

- **July 31, 2026** for omalizumab (Xolair®), tocilizumab (Actemra®), and ustekinumab (Stelara®);
- **January 31, 2027** for denosumab (Prolia®).

Exception Drug Status (EDS) Coverage: Addition of Biosimilars

- On January 21, 2026, the Drug Plan system was updated to add the corresponding biosimilar EDS approvals for patients with current EDS approval for Prolia®, Xolair®, Actemra®, or Stelara®. The effective date for the biosimilar EDS approvals is February 1, 2026. Prescribers/pharmacists do not need to request EDS for a biosimilar for these patients.

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- The reference biologic EDS approval will remain in place until the end of the transition period, when patients will be responsible for the cost of the reference biologic unless they have an approved exemption.
- Health care providers can confirm a biosimilar EDS approval on the Pharmaceutical Information Program (PIP) viewer.

Patient Notification

- A Patient Information Package will be mailed to affected patients the week of **January 26, 2026**. The package includes an introduction to Phase 2 of the Biosimilars Initiative, an EDS approval letter patients can provide to private insurers, and additional patient information handouts (enclosed).
- A "Guide for Patients" is also available at www.saskatchewan.ca/biosimilars under section 7, "Resources and Studies."

Prescriptions for Biosimilar Medications

- Biosimilars are not listed as interchangeable with the reference biologic or with other biosimilars that have the same proper/common name on the Saskatchewan Formulary.
- Reference biologic and biosimilar brands cannot be substituted by pharmacists. Patients will need a new prescription from their prescriber for a listed biosimilar of Prolia®, Xolair®, Actemra®, or Stelara®. The prescription must clearly indicate the biosimilar brand to be dispensed by the pharmacy.

List of Patients for Prescribers

- Prescribers may request a list of patients who may need to transition to a biosimilar version to maintain Drug Plan coverage of their treatment, by completing the enclosed **Patient List Request Form**.
- The list will include patients who have received a recent prescription claim for an affected reference biologic.
- The Patient List Request Form is also available on the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative webpage at www.saskatchewan.ca/biosimilars under section 6, "Prescriber Forms."

Exemptions

- Exemptions for a patient to maintain coverage of a reference biologic will be considered for those who cannot use a biosimilar for a medical reason.

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- Prescribers may submit an **Exemption Request Form** for review by the Drug Plan on a case-by-case basis. The Exemption Request Form is available on the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative webpage at www.saskatchewan.ca/biosimilars under section 6, "Prescriber Forms."
- Prescribers and patients will be notified of exemption decisions by letter.
- For questions related to biosimilar exemption requests, prescribers can contact sk.biosimilars@health.gov.sk.ca or call 1-800-667-2549 (306-787-8744 in Regina), and press 2, then 3.
- Patients will continue to be able to access Saskatchewan Drug Plan coverage of their reference biologic medication if a suitable biosimilar format is not available.

Questions and Support

- For prescriber questions about the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative:
  - Visit www.saskatchewan.ca/biosimilars
  - Email sk.biosimilars@health.gov.sk.ca
  - Call 1-800-667-2549 (306-787-8744 in Regina), press option 2, then 3
- For clinical support from medSask:
  - Health care providers:
    - Visit medsask.usask.ca/professional-practice/biosimilars-in-Saskatchewan
    - Email druginfo@usask.ca
    - Call 1-800-667-3425 (306-966-6340 in Saskatoon)
  - Patients:
    - Visit medsask.usask.ca/general-public/biosimilars-in-saskatchewan
    - Email med.sask@usask.ca
    - Call 1-800-665-3784 (306-966-6378 in Saskatoon)

The Saskatchewan Drug Plan is committed to understanding the needs of health care providers and patients to ensure the transition to biosimilars is as seamless as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch

Enclosures

What are Biosimilars?

Biologic drug—a drug made from living organisms
Reference biologic or originator drug—the first version of a biologic drug to be made
Biosimilar drug—the next version of a biologic drug to be made after the reference biologic's patent expires

Biosimilars work in the same way as the reference biologic. They are built similarly and people can expect the same results from biosimilars.

Biosimilars are: Safe | Effective | High Quality

Biosimilars are Tried and Tested:

Available and used for many years: Biosimilars have been approved in Canada since 2009 and are used to treat diabetes, anemia, psoriasis, inflammatory bowel disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and other conditions.

Many people have successfully started or transitioned to a biosimilar: Provinces and territories across Canada (and many countries around the world) have similar policies that support the use of biosimilars.

Approved by Health Canada using a rigorous process: Drug studies and clinical trials must show that biosimilars are as effective and safe as reference biologics.

What stays the same:

- **How effective your medication is:** Biosimilars are proven to work as well as reference biologics
- **How you feel taking your medication:** There are no expected differences in side effects between the biosimilar and reference biologic
- **How you take your medication**
- **The dose of medication that you take**

What might be different:

- **How your medication looks:** The package/container may be different
- **How you access services:** The Patient Support Program will change
- **The clinic that administers your medication:** If your medication is given to you as an IV infusion at a clinic, the location may change
- **How you store your medication:** There may be changes to where you keep it and how long it is safe at room temperature

Talk to your healthcare providers to help you transition to a biosimilar.

Ask questions about:

- the similarities and differences between your reference biologic and the biosimilar.
- what to expect from the transition.
- where to find resources about biosimilars.

QUESTIONS FOR A PHARMACIST?

medSask
YOUR MEDICATION INFORMATION SERVICE

Contact medSask to have your biosimilar questions answered free of charge by a pharmacist. You can reach us by **phone: 1 800 665 3784** or **email: med.sask@usask.ca**.

17 JAN 2023

Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative
Information for Patients

Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch
3475 Albert Street
REGINA SK S4S 6X6
Phone: 1-800-667-2549 (306-787-8744 in Regina)
(Option 2, then 2)
Email: sk.biosimilars@health.gov.sk.ca

About the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative

The Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative promotes the use of biosimilar versions of biologic medications by individuals who require these medications.

Under the Biosimilars Initiative, patients receive Saskatchewan Drug Plan coverage for a biosimilar version of their biologic medication where one is available and listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary.

Using biosimilars presents an opportunity for cost savings and long-term health system sustainability while providing safe and effective medication options.

Patients who are currently using an affected reference biologic medication will need to transition to a biosimilar version by the end of the announced transition period to maintain Saskatchewan Drug Plan coverage of their treatment.

You may be affected by this policy if:

1. You are newly starting or currently using an affected reference biologic medication, **and**
2. You receive Saskatchewan Drug Plan coverage for this biologic medication.

The Biosimilars Initiative will apply to future reference biologics as new biosimilars are added to the Saskatchewan Formulary.

All provincial public drug plans across Canada have put similar policies in place to promote the uptake of biosimilar medications and many countries have also introduced measures to support biosimilar use.

Additional Information

Private Drug Coverage for Biosimilar Medications

- The Biosimilars Initiative applies to patients receiving Saskatchewan Drug Plan coverage of an affected reference biologic medication.
- Contact your private insurance provider with questions about your private drug coverage benefits and how the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative may apply to your private benefits.

Biosimilar Effectiveness and Safety

- Biosimilars work in the same way as the reference biologic; there are no clinically meaningful differences between the two medications.
- Biosimilar manufacturers submit studies to Health Canada and go through a rigorous process to prove that their biosimilar works as well and is as safe as the reference biologic.
- The same clinical effect can be expected from biosimilars as from the reference biologic.
- A growing number of patients around the world are safely using biosimilar treatments.
- To learn more about biosimilars:
    - Find trustworthy information on biosimilars (resources are available online at www.saskatchewan.ca/biosimilars).
    - Speak to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about your biosimilar questions and options.

Exemptions to the Biosimilars Initiative

- Your prescriber can help determine if you need to remain on the reference biologic for medical reasons.
- Your prescriber can submit a request for your situation to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Saskatchewan Drug Plan.

Patient Supports

- Go to our webpage: www.saskatchewan.ca/biosimilars.
- You may contact your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist with questions about your treatment or about biosimilar medications.
- Many biosimilar manufacturers provide patient support programs (PSPs) and services similar to those of the reference biologic manufacturer to assist patients starting and transitioning to a biosimilar medication. See the Patient Support Programs (PSPs) section on our webpage.
- medSask is a drug information service that provides accurate, evidence-based information on medications and medication therapy to the general public, healthcare providers, and other collaborators. medSask is available to support you with questions about biosimilar drugs. To contact medSask, you may:
    - Visit medsask.usask.ca/general-public/biosimilars-in-saskatchewan; or
    - Email med.sask@usask.ca; or
    - Call 1-800-665-3784 (306-966-6378 in Saskatoon).
- For general questions about the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative, please contact the Drug Plan at sk.biosimilars@health.gov.sk.ca or call 1-800-667-2549 (306-787-8744 in Regina), and press 2, then 2.

Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative
Patient List Request Form

Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch
3475 Albert Street
REGINA SK S4S 6X6
Phone: 1-800-667-2549 (306-787-8744 in Regina)
(option 2, then 2)
Fax: 306-798-1089
Email: sk.biosimilars@health.gov.sk.ca

This form is for prescribers to request a list of patients who may need to transition to a biosimilar to maintain Saskatchewan Drug Plan coverage under the Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative.
The list will include the Health Services Number of patients who have filled a recent prescription claim through the Saskatchewan Drug Plan for the reference biologic drug(s) selected below where you are the prescriber listed. Please note that patients may also coordinate their drug coverage benefits through private insurance.

THIS IS NOT AN APPLICATION FORM TO REQUEST EXCEPTION DRUG STATUS COVERAGE.

All fields on this form must be fully completed for processing. Forms with missing information will be returned.

Section 1 – Prescriber Information

Prescriber Full Name:

Type of Prescriber (check one):
☐ Physician ☐ Nurse Practitioner ☐ Pharmacist

Prescriber Secure Email Address:

Prescriber Phone Number:

Prescriber Mailing Address (Street, City, Province, Postal Code):

The list of patients will be sent via encrypted email or mail.
Please indicate how you would like to receive this information (check one):

☐ Encrypted email
☐ Mail

Note: For privacy and security reasons, prescribers requesting a list of patients via encrypted email will receive a password to access the list of patients in a separate email.

Section 2 – Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative Reference Biologic Medication

DRUG(S) REQUESTED (check all that apply):

☐ **Actemra®** (tocilizumab) ☐ **Prolia®** (denosumab) ☐ **Stelara®** (ustekinumab)

☐ **Xolair®** (omalizumab)

Section 3 – Prescriber Request to Release Information

Information will be provided to prescribers in accordance with Section 27(4)(k)(ii) of *The Health Information Protection Act*.

If you have any questions about the disclosure of this information, please call 1-800-667-2549 (toll-free) or 306-787-8744 (Regina) (option 2, then 2).

Prescriber Signature:

Date Signed:

SEND COMPLETED FORM BY EMAIL TO sk.biosimilars@health.gov.sk.ca OR FAX TO 306-798-1089
OR MAIL TO 3475 ALBERT STREET, REGINA SK S4S 6X6