

Behind the Scenes at the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program (NLPDP)

The first issue of this newsletter provided general information regarding the drug review process through the Joint Atlantic Expert Advisory Committee (EAC). This issue will provide more detailed information on reviews of new drug therapies and recommendations of the EAC, since the formation of the committee in February, 2002.

Drug Benefit Categories of the EAC are as follows:

Open/Full/Regular Benefits

- Drugs listed in provincial drug program benefit lists that have no specific criteria, prior approval requirements or other reimbursement conditions.

Restricted Benefits with Criteria (e.g. special authorization, exception drug status)

- Drugs that have value in specific circumstances, specific patient groups, or have quantity and frequency limitations.
- Drugs in this category have specific reimbursement criteria.

Non-Formulary (Individual/Case-by-Case Clinical Review)

- Drugs which are not listed in provincial drug program benefit lists. This category includes drugs which have not been reviewed by the EAC, drugs for which the published evidence does not support the clinical value or cost of the drug relative to existing therapies, and those having insufficient clinical evidence to recommend coverage.
- In exceptional cases, individual requests for coverage may be considered by the provincial drug plans. Physicians can make a written request for a specific patient and coverage decisions are made on a case by case basis.

Exclusions

- Certain drug therapies for particular conditions are specifically excluded as benefits under the Atlantic provincial drug programs. Each provincial drug program has an exclusion list that varies among the jurisdictions. These drugs are not eligible for coverage and individual requests are not considered.

Since the formation of the EAC, 56 drugs have been reviewed with 42 recommended for coverage and the remaining 14 were not recommended. Of the 42 proposed for coverage, 32 were recommended for special authorization status and 10 were recommended for open benefit status.

Highlights of the recommendations are as follows:

<u>Special Authorization</u>	<u>Regular Open Benefit</u>	<u>Not Recommended for Coverage</u>
Pariet 10mg	FXT40(fluoxetine 40mg)	Dovobet
Fosamax 70mg	Vagifem	Nexium
Marinol	Flovent HFA	Prometrium
Novorapid	Remeron	Aerius
Mirena	Travatan	
Aranesp	Comtan	
	Requip	
	Mirapex	

For a listing of special authorization drugs and their criteria for coverage, as well as the open benefit listing, please visit our web site at <http://www.gov.nf.ca/health/nlpdp>. The web site is updated regularly, but please feel free to contact this division by phone 729-6507 or 1-888-222-0533 if you cannot locate the required information.

Policy Changes for Coverage of Proton Pump Inhibitors

Currently NLPDP considers four PPIs for Special Authorization: Pantoloc, Losec, Prevacid, and **Pariet 10mg tabs**.

Pariet coverage was reviewed by the EAC in September, 2002. It was recommended to be listed as Special Authorization, subject to the same criteria for coverage as the other PPIs.

Pariet is approximately 35 per cent less expensive than the other PPIs and thus has potential for significant cost savings to this program. Current evidence suggests that the different PPIs have similar efficacy at comparable doses. As such, since November, 2002, clients covered under NLPDP, who meet the criteria for PPI approval, are granted coverage of Pariet first and only if they fail to respond to an adequate trial (20mg daily dosing for minimum of eight weeks) are the other PPIs considered. Only the 10 mg tabs are considered for approval as two of the 10 mg tabs are more cost effective than one of the 20mg tabs.

Preferential coverage of Pariet 10mg does not however apply to H.pylori eradication therapy. Either of the above PPIs can be approved for this indication for a reasonable one week regime.

For clients previously approved for long term PPI coverage, preferential coverage of Pariet 10mg has not been instituted at this time. However, physicians wishing to switch patients with current PPI coverage to Pariet 10mg tabs can do so at anytime. This can be accomplished by contacting this division by phone 729-6507 or 1-888-222-0533 or fax 729-2851.