

JUNE BULLETIN

ADDITIONS TO NURSE PRACTITIONERS' PRESCRIBED BENEFITS

Effective July 1, 2007 the following additional drugs will be reimbursable under the Pharmacare Programs when prescribed by a Nurse Practitioner:

Betahistine
Cefprozil
Cefuroxime
Perindopril
Perindopril / Indapamide
Hydrochlorothiazide / Triamterene

Effective July 1, 2007, the restrictions which are unique to nurse practitioner prescribing will be removed from the following drugs. Please note that the Exception Status Criteria still applies.

Azithromycin
Lansoprazole
Omeprazole
Pantoprazole
Rabeprazole

These additional products will be indicated in the next publication of the Nova Scotia Formulary. For the drugs which have Exception Status criteria, written requests can be received from Nurse Practitioners.

For a complete list of drugs for which nurse practitioners are authorized to prescribe (whether or not they are reimbursed by Pharmacare) please refer to the Schedule of Drugs and Drug Interventions for Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioners on the website: www.crnns.ca of the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia.

INTERCHANGEABILITY UPDATE: REFORMULATION OF APO-ERYTHRO-EC CAPSULES

The enteric coated granules contained inside the Apo-Erythro-EC 250mg and 333mg capsules have been "reformulated from small enteric coated pellets to larger enteric coated tablets contained within the capsule".

The new enteric coated formulation is approved for interchangeability with the corresponding strength of Eryc provided that the dosage is taken orally in its intact capsule (i.e. the capsule is not opened) to administer the dose. Apo-Erythro-EC is not considered interchangeable if the capsule is opened to administer the contents (e.g. sprinkle on food or administer via a tube).

CHANGE IN CRITERIA FOR CARVEDILOL

Carvedilol (Coreg®) was recently reviewed by the Atlantic Common Drug Review and the criteria for coverage has been modified to the following:

- for treatment of stable symptomatic heart failure with a left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) less than or equal to 40%

INCLUDED WITH THIS BULLETIN:

- ▶ **New Products, effective July 1, 2007**
- ▶ **New Diabetic & Ostomy Products, eff. July 1, 2007**
- ▶ **Delisted Products, effective August 1, 2007**
- ▶ **Methyldopa a Potentially Inappropriate Medication in the Elderly**

METHYLDOPA A POTENTIALLY INAPPROPRIATE MEDICATION IN THE ELDERLY

The Beers' Criteria, an expert consensus list of potentially inappropriate medications in the elderly, has identified methyldopa as a medication with a "high" severity rating. Adverse effects associated with methyldopa include drowsiness, sedation, depression, lethargy and hypotension.

Methyldopa is an inexpensive antihypertensive agent that acts on the central nervous system as an α^2 -agonist, thereby causing a reduction in sympathetic nervous system outflow leading to decreased blood pressure. Evidence supporting monotherapy with methyldopa is limited to relatively small clinical trials measuring blood pressure lowering outcomes only. Methyldopa in combination with hydrochlorothiazide/triamterene has demonstrated a cardiovascular mortality benefit compared to placebo in a double-blind randomized trial; however, methyldopa was only allocated to patients receiving hydrochlorothiazide/triamterene when target blood pressure levels were exceeded. With only 35% of patients in the active therapy group receiving methyldopa, it is unknown if the addition of methyldopa offered any additional benefit to hydrochlorothiazide/triamterene alone compared to placebo.

The 2006 Canadian Hypertension treatment guidelines did not include methyldopa as a first line therapy option for hypertension however considers it as an add-on therapy option in treatment-resistant cases of isolated systolic hypertension where dual therapy with first line

agents has failed (Grade D recommendation – based on expert opinion only). This recommendation has remained the same in a 2007 updated version of the guidelines.

Methyldopa was recently reviewed by the Atlantic Common Drug Review and will remain general (open) benefit status on the Nova Scotia Pharmacare Program. The use of methyldopa is not recommended as monotherapy for the treatment of hypertension due to a lack of clinical evidence and potential for adverse events. Methyldopa should generally be avoided in the elderly population however if used, close monitoring of potential adverse events is required.

References:

- ¹ Fick DM, Cooper JW, Wade WE et al. Updating the Beers criteria for potentially inappropriate medication use in older adults. *Arch Intern Med* 2003; 163:2716-24.
- ² Amery A, Brixko P, Clement D et al. Mortality and morbidity results from the European working party of high blood pressure in the elderly trial. *Lancet* 1985 June: 1349-54.
- ³ Khan NA, McAlister FA, Rabkin SW et al. The 2006 Canadian Hypertension Education Program recommendations for the management of hypertension: Part II-Therapy. *Can J Cardiol* 2006 May 15;22(7):583-93.
- ⁴ Canadian Hypertension Education Program. 2007 Recommendations for the Management of Hypertension (<http://www.hypertension.ca/chep/docs/2007ClinicalSummary.pdf>)

NEW PRODUCTS

The following products are "New Listings to the Nova Scotia Formulary" *effective July 1, 2007*. The benefit status of each product within the Nova Scotia Pharmacare Programs is indicated.

<u>DIN</u>	<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>MFR</u>	<u>PRESCRIBER</u>	<u>BENEFIT STATUS</u>
02280213	Avalide 300/25mg Tab	SAV	DR	SF
02284995	DDAVP MELT 60mcg Tab	FEI	DR	E
02285002	DDAVP MELT 120mcg Tab	FEI	DR	E
02285533	Kaletra 200/50mg Tab	ABB		not insured
02243797	Pariet 20mg EC Tab	JAN	DR	E
02279363	pms-Dexamethasone 2mg Tab	PMS	DR	SFC

NEW DIABETIC & OSTOMY PRODUCTS

The following diabetic and ostomy products are "New Listings to the Nova Scotia Formulary" *effective July 1, 2007*. The benefit status of each product within the Nova Scotia Pharmacare Programs is indicated.

<u>PIN</u>	<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>MFR</u>	<u>PRESCRIBER</u>	<u>BENEFIT STATUS</u>	<u>MAC PRICE</u>
Diabetic Products:					
97799691	Abbott Thin 28g Lancet (#7004302 - 100/box)	MID	DR NP P	SFD	0.0500
97799689	Abbott Thin 28g Lancet (#9868203 - 200/box)	MID	DR NP P	SFD	0.0500
97799749	Ascensia Breeze 2 Test Strip Disc (#1469 - 50/box)	BDD	DR NP P	SFD	0.7400
97799748	Ascensia Breeze 2 Test Strip Disc (#1470 - 100/box)	BDD	DR NP P	SFD	0.7400
97799703	Ascensia Contour Test Strip (#7081B - 50/box)	BDD	DR NP P	SFD	0.7400
97799702	Ascensia Contour Test Strip (#7091B - 100/box)	BDD	DR NP P	SFD	0.7400
97799882	BD Ultra-Fine Lancets (#326571 - 100/box)	BTD	DR NP P	SFD	0.0500
Ostomy Products:					
95098474	Assura Easyclose Drainable Pouch (#14497)	COL	DR NP P	SFC	N/A
95098475	Assura Easyclose Drainable Pouch (#14495)	COL	DR NP P	SFC	N/A
95098476	Assura Easyclose Drainable Pouch (#14493)	COL	DR NP P	SFC	N/A

DELISTED PRODUCTS

Effective August 1, 2007 zopiclone 7.5mg tablets will be delisted as benefits under the Nova Scotia Pharmacare Programs. Patients who are currently using this strength of zopiclone will be grandfathered for coverage.

<u>PRODUCT</u>	<u>DIN</u>	<u>MFR</u>
Apo-Zopiclone 7.5mg Tab	02218313	APX
Co Zopiclone 7.5mg Tab	02271958	COB
Gen-Zopiclone 7.5mg Tab	02238596	GPM
Imovane 7.5mg Tab	01926799	SAV
Novo-Zopiclone 7.5mg Tab	02251469	NOP
Nu-Zopiclone 7.5mg Tab	02228270	NXP
pms-Zopiclone 7.5mg Tab	02240606	PMS
RAN-Zopiclone 7.5mg Tab	02267926	RAN
ratio-Zopiclone 7.5mg Tab	02242481	RPH
Rhovane 7.5mg Tab	02008203	SAV
Sandoz Zopiclone 7.5mg Tab	02257580	SDZ