

Number: MED 273	Date: May 30, 2024	1 of 3
Subject: Funding changes for Paxlovid	Reference: Alberta Drug Benefit List	

To: all practitioners and billing staff

The federal government is no longer providing supply of Paxlovid™ to provinces and territories and the remaining stock expires on May 31, 2024.

Going forward, Alberta will provide coverage for Paxlovid for Albertans at the highest risk of progression to severe COVID-19 and who are members of government-sponsored drug plans.

New reimbursement structure for Paxlovid™

Effective May 24, 2024, Paxlovid™ is listed on the *Alberta Drug Benefit List (ADBL)*. Coverage of Paxlovid™ is available to members of a government-sponsored drug programs, via Restricted Benefit/Special Authorization, who meet the following criteria:

“Mild-to-moderate coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in adults with positive results of direct severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) viral testing, and who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death in patients who are considered to be moderately to severely immunosuppressed and are receiving drug therapy for associated indications.”

*Please refer to the online *Interactive Alberta Drug Benefit List* to review the comprehensive Restricted Benefit/Special Authorization coverage criteria, which includes a sample list of immunocompromising conditions.

Note: Albertans who require access to Paxlovid™ and do not have government-sponsored drug coverage are encouraged to speak to their private insurance plan administrator to determine if this therapy is funded under their policy. Paxlovid™ has been added as a benefit to Alberta Blue Cross group and Individual Product plans where eligible.

Accessing Paxlovid

Albertans who have tested positive for COVID-19 can call their primary care practitioner to determine if they meet the eligibility criteria or are candidates for Paxlovid. In situations where an Albertan does not have a primary care practitioner, or their primary care practitioner isn't prescribing Paxlovid, they can call the dedicated line at 1-844-343-0971 to find out if they qualify to receive treatment.

When calling the dedicated line, Albertans will be asked to leave a message and staff will call back to ask questions before referring them to a health care professional, who will determine if they are eligible and write a prescription. For Albertans eligible for Paxlovid, the prescribing physician will direct them to pick up their prescription at the closest community pharmacy stocking Paxlovid™. Those who cannot have their prescription picked up by someone else are advised to have it delivered or arrange for curbside pickup to mitigate the risk of spreading the infection.

Long-term care or designated supportive living facilities

Albertans living in long-term care or designated supportive living facilities, who are members of a government-sponsored drug program and meet the established eligibility criteria, will continue to have access to Paxlovid™. However, please note, all claims for Paxlovid™ are now subject to the applicable reimbursement structure for government-sponsored drug programs. Paxlovid™ will no longer be provided free of charge.

Please note:

The Restricted Benefit coverage functionality of Paxlovid™ is triggered when a patient with government-sponsored drug coverage brings a prescription for Paxlovid™ to a community pharmacy, and the Alberta Blue Cross PRIDE^{RT} claim adjudication system identifies that the patient has claimed for therapies used to treat conditions associated with immunosuppression, as outlined in the Special Authorization criteria published on the *ADBL*. Should the system identify one of these therapies, the prescription will be accepted automatically. The following drug classes are considered under the criteria:

- Calcineurin inhibitors (e.g., Tacrolimus, Cyclosporine)
- Antimetabolites (e.g., Mycophenolate mofetil, Azathioprine, methotrexate)
- mTOR inhibitors (e.g., Sirolimus, Everolimus)
- Corticosteroids* (e.g., Prednisone, Methylprednisolone)
- Cancer drugs
- anti-CD20 agents
- B-cell depleting agents (such as rituximab)
- Biologics (not including insulin)
- JAK Inhibitors
- Antiretroviral Therapy
- Erythropoietin Receptor Agonists
- Drugs specific to renal conditions (e.g., sevelamer, cinacalcet, sucroferric oxyhydroxide, lanthanum carbonate)

*not including inhaled corticosteroids

Regarding the requirement for prescribers to fill out the applicable special authorization form for Paxlovid™, this option remains available when the Restricted Benefit pathway is not appropriate (e.g., patient is being treated for an immunosuppressive condition not outlined within the special authorization criteria). Given the time sensitive nature of Paxlovid, Alberta Blue Cross will endeavor to assess Special Authorization requests in an urgent manner.

PAXLOVID™ PRODUCT INFORMATION

The product monograph has been posted on the Health Canada website at [covid-vaccine.canada.ca/ info/ paxlovid-en.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/covid-19/vaccines-and-biologics/paxlovid-en.html).

- Paxlovid™ is a combination of 2 antiviral drugs— nirmatrelvir and ritonavir—for early treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19.
 - DIN 02524031 consists of 2 sets of tablets (total of 3 tablets per dose) taken orally, twice a day for 5 days.
 - DIN 02527804 consists of 2 sets of tablets (total of 2 tablets per dose for individuals with moderate renal impairment with an eGFR of 30 to 59 mL/min) taken orally, twice a day for 5 days.
- Treatment must start within 5 days of symptoms appearing as Paxlovid™ has been shown to be most effective when administered in the early phases of infection and viral replication, while symptoms remain mild to moderate.

Paxlovid™ has many drug interactions and medical contraindications that prescribers must be aware of. Please refer to the Paxlovid™ product monograph for more information on these drug interactions.

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