KERN HEALTH SYSTEMS

PROVIDER bulletin

March 10, 2020

Dear Provider:

Kern Family Health Care strives to provide quality and safe care to its members in accordance with current evidence based guidelines. As a Medi-Cal managed care plan, this is paired with availing cost effective therapies within those guidelines. Recently new drugs have come to market that do not have the conventional Brand/generic relationship that had been established. Biosimilars, and what are referred to as Follow On drugs, are becoming increasingly more common. They may be viewed in a similar light as multi-branded drugs. Examples of multi-branded drugs: Ventolin HFA, ProAir HFA, Proventil HFA; Prinivil, Zestril. These new drugs often have cost advantages compared to the Brand/originator/reference product. More of these are heading to market. Many biosimilars have already been approved by the FDA, but are not currently available.

Due to technical aspects of brand/generic interchangeability laws, the biosimilar and follow on products may not be automatically substituted at the pharmacy level. Clinically, however, they deliver the same outcomes.[1,2]

KHFC will now be authorizing all requests for the innovator/reference drugs listed below in the left column with their corresponding biosimilar listed in the right column. Documentation demonstrating medical necessity will be needed to justify formulations other than the plan's preferred listing. Please note, as new biosilimars come to market, this list may change.

Reference Drug	**Preferred Biosimilar**
Remicade (infliximab)	**Renflexis (infliximab-abda)**
Neupogen (filgrastim)	**Nivestym (filgrastim-AAFI)**
Rituxan (rituximab)	**Ruxience (rituximab-PVVR)**
Herceptin (trastuzumab)	**Kanjinti (trastuzumab-ANNS)**
Epogen/Procrit (epoetin)	**Retacrit (epoetin-EPBX)**

If you have any questions, please contact KFHC at 800-391-2000.

Sincerely,

Bruce Wearda, R.Ph.
Director of Pharmacy

[1]Biosimilar means that the biological product is approved based on data demonstrating that it is highly similar to an FDA-approved biological product, known as a reference product, and that there are no clinically meaningful differences between the biosimilar product and the reference product. Biosimilarity of Renflexis has been demonstrated for the condition(s) of use (e.g. indication(s), dosing regimen(s)), strength(s), dosage form(s), and route(s) of administration described in its Full Prescribing Information.

[2]Link to FDA: https://www.fda.gov/drugs/biosimilars/prescribing-biosimilar-and-interchangeable-products