

Rx Inform

Bringing You Key Issues in Prescription Benefits Administration

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Generics Update: Protonix and OTC Zyrtec



Generic Protonix Update

Last week we notified you that a generic for Protonix, called pantoprazole, was made available by generic manufacturer Teva. In our bulletin, we noted that pantoprazole was launched “at risk” of infringing on Wyeth’s patent for branded Protonix. As expected, developments are happening that are important for you to know.

At this time, Teva has agreed to a 30-day stay on distributing the generic, and they are planning to work on a settlement with Wyeth. This means Teva will not distribute any additional generic product for the next 30 days while in discussion with Wyeth about a potential settlement. The amount of generic product in the market is unknown at this time—various sources indicate that wholesalers and pharmacies have between two to six months worth of supply.

Wyeth notified Innoviant that it will honor existing contracts if Protonix remains at second tier (as a preferred brand) on our Preferred Products List. With rebate dollars calculated into the net cost, the plan cost for Protonix is about 15-20 percent less than the generic. In addition, members can apply for unlimited co-pay rebates at www.Protonix.com—so the branded medication can be cheaper for members as well.

Wyeth is considering a settlement with Teva that could stop production of the generic. They are also reportedly contemplating a lawsuit to pursue triple damages as the patent was previously determined to be valid until 2010. In addition, several sources have speculated

that Wyeth may consider launching its own generic version of Protonix to compete with generic manufacturers, or that they may market an over-the-counter (OTC) version similar to Prilosec OTC if they do not reach a settlement with Teva. We should know much more within 20 to 30 days.

Currently, Innoviant is processing pantoprazole at a generic co-payment amount, and Protonix is processing at a preferred brand co-payment. If members wish to continue taking Protonix until the generic price drops significantly, they can go to www.Protonix.com and access the “Renew program” to sign-up for co-pay rebates (not to exceed \$30) on their preferred brand Protonix prescription fills. Uniquely, these rebates are continuous and not just a one time reimbursement.

Innoviant will continue to monitor the status and progress of the generic supply and brand manufacturer developments. We will also watch for the generic to become readily available and for its price to drop below the net cost of the brand. As we gain more information over the next 30 days, we will keep you informed and update you on recommended formulary changes.

Generic Zyrtec Available OTC

As of January 5, the antihistamine cetirizine, which is the generic of Zyrtec, became available as an over-the-counter (OTC) product. A prescription is not needed to obtain

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Generic Zyrtec Available OTC (continued)



the generic as it is an OTC purchase. The branded Zyrtec product is expected to go to OTC status around January 16.

OTC products are not typically covered through the Innoviant prescription benefit, unless they are part of the RxOTC program. Currently the OTC generic versions of Zyrtec are priced only 10 percent less than prescription-only branded Zyrtec. Because of the high price of cetirizine, it will not be covered under the prescription benefit but is available for cash purchase without a prescription.

Innoviant will continue processing Zyrtec prescriptions at preferred brand co-payments for now. However, it is possible that Zyrtec's manufacturer may discontinue the brand prescription product sometime during 2008 once it has an OTC option available. The Innoviant Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee will monitor OTC pricing and review coverage recommendations as we gain more information. We will keep you informed regarding any coverage changes, and members using Zyrtec will receive 30 days advance notice before any changes take effect.

Please continue to watch for developing news from Innoviant. If you have any questions, please contact your account manager at 866-800-4321.

