



Oct. 20, 2022

Joint Message: Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative

The Ministry of Health has launched a Saskatchewan Biosimilars Initiative, making Saskatchewan the seventh province to employ a comprehensive drug coverage policy to increase the use of cost-effective biosimilar medicines.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSS), the College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan (CRNS), the Saskatchewan Medical Association (SMA), the Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan (PAS), and the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals (SCPP) support this initiative.

This program will ensure Saskatchewan residents have access to high-quality medications at a lower cost.

Patients may be anxious or concerned about using a biosimilar version of their medication. Physicians, nurses, and pharmacists are asked to approach patient questions with evidence-based information to help build patient confidence in the data supporting biosimilar use and transition.

Important points to note:

- The initiative includes 10 drugs listed in the Saskatchewan Formulary and will include additional biosimilars as they are launched and listed on the Formulary.
- Established patients already receiving a reference (original) biologic drug with an available biosimilar version will be required to use a biosimilar version by April 30, 2023, in order to maintain coverage under the Drug Plan.
- During the transition from present to April 30, 2023, patients will have coverage for both the reference and biosimilar options.
- Patients or providers should not expect a difference in therapeutic effect, whether a patient receives a reference drug or a biosimilar version.
- For patients who cannot use a biosimilar for a medical reason, prescribers will be able to submit a request, along with clinical rationale, for review by the Drug Plan on a case-by-case basis.
- Patients who use the affected reference biologics will have coverage proactively added for the biosimilars. Health care providers will not need to submit an Exception Drug Status application for a patient to start using a biosimilar. Impacted patients who may need to start using a biosimilar version of their medication will be notified by letter. Health care providers can also confirm their patient's coverage on their Pharmaceutical Information Program (PIP) Profile.

CPSS, CRNS, SMA, PAS, and SCPP believe this is a significant step in improving health care in Saskatchewan and increasing patient safety and appreciates the important role to be played by Saskatchewan health care providers in this initiative.