The Challenge:

BIOLOGIC DRUGS ARE ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING AREAS IN PHARMACEUTICAL DEVELOPMENT.

While biologics are generally very effective in treating an increasing number of illnesses, they can be extremely expensive compared to traditional drugs. And with more biologic drugs in development, those expenses are expected to spiral upwards.

The Solution:

GSC'S BIOSIMILARS POLICY

This policy ensures that lower-cost biosimilar drugs are used instead of originator products when proven equally safe and effective.

gsc green shield canada

GSC'S BIOSIMILARS POLICY

Green Shield Canada's (GSC's) policy lists biosimilar drugs (or subsequent-entry biologic drugs) as **preferred products under our formularies**. This means that a patient who is newly prescribed biologic therapy is required to start on the less expensive but equally effective biosimilar product. A biosimilar is a biologic product that is highly *similar* to an approved originator (sometimes called an innovator) biologic product. To be approved by Health Canada, a biosimilar application follows the New Drug Submission process and must demonstrate the same clinical outcomes in terms of safety and efficacy as the originator product. With biosimilars typically costing 25 to 47 per cent less than the originator product, our approach ensures that plan members who can safely and appropriately use a biosimilar will be required to do so. However, where warranted due to exceptional circumstances, a plan member can be covered for the originator product.

A policy based on the evidence

In developing our Biosimilars Policy, we undertook a comprehensive review and analysis of published information and evidence about the safety and efficacy of these drugs. In addition, we considered information from European jurisdictions, many of which have had over a decade of real-world experience with the use of biosimilar drugs.

Our Biosimilars Policy is designed to be flexible and accommodate the rare circumstances when a biosimilar drug may not be appropriate for a plan member. For example, in the case of Remicade® for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, there may be some instances where plan members residing in smaller communities do not have ready access to a biosimilar drug infusion site. In these cases, we will approve the originator product to ensure the plan member can receive timely treatment.

Examples of preferred biosimilars:

ORIGINATOR BIOLOGIC	BIOSIMILAR	WHAT IT'S USED FOR...
Remicade®	Inflectra™	Rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, and ankylosing spondylitis – it's an anti-inflammatory drug
Lantus®	Basaglar™	Diabetes – it's a type of insulin
Neupogen®	Grastofil®	Cancer – it helps patients taking chemotherapy fight infections and fever
Enbrel®	Brenzys™ and Erelzi™	Rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis – it's an anti-inflammatory drug

As the use of biologic drugs becomes more widespread and more biologics come off patent in the near future, we expect to see additional biosimilars come to market. With our Biosimilars Policy, GSC is ideally positioned to take advantage of the cost savings, future market forces, and competition that may drive down the prices of biosimilars, while ensuring that plan members receive the most appropriate biologic drug for their condition.

Now you're in control of costs with GSC's Biosimilars Policy.

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