

Xeloda Medicare Update

The following information summarizes how oral chemotherapy agents such as XELODA will be covered by Medicare next year once the Part D benefit kicks in. The bottom line is all things are staying the same.

According to CMS guidance, drugs that are currently covered under Part B are excluded from coverage by Part D plans; therefore, it is expected that XELODA will continue to be covered only under Part B. There is confusion because some of the PDPs have included it on their formulary listings online, but when it comes to the Rx being filled, it should only be covered by Part B. The documentation from CMS can be found at the link below. The conclusion comes from the definition of a Part D drug.

Definition of a Part D Covered Drug

A Part D covered drug is available only by prescription, approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (or is a drug described under section 1927(k)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii) of the Act), used and sold in the United States, and used for a medically accepted indication.

The definition of a covered Part D drug excludes any drug for which as prescribed and dispensed or administered to an

individual, payments would be available under Parts A or B of Medicare for that individual, even though a deductible may apply.

To the extent that a Part B-covered oral anti-cancer drug has no other medically accepted indication besides cancer treatment, Part D plans should not include these drugs on their formularies because of Part B coverage. They should always deny claims for these drugs. For the drugs that have other medically accepted indications, prior authorization programs or other mechanisms to obtain diagnostic information could be used to ensure appropriate payment.

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/pdps/SpecGuidncMaterials.asp>, Medicare Part B versus Part D Coverage Issues, Revised July 27, 2005.

Medicare Part B Capecitabine in Combination Therapy

Noridian Administrative Services announces a new coverage policy concerning Capecitabine in combination therapy.

Capecitabine (Xeloda®), J8520, is an orally administered analog of 5-fluorouracil (5-FU, Adrucil®), which is a component of many multi-drug chemotherapy regimens covered by Medicare. Community practice standards and several reliable studies have found the effects of capecitabine and 5-FU in chemotherapy regimens to be essentially the same. Noridian Administrative Services (NAS) has determined that for coverage purposes we will consider capecitabine equivalent to 5-FU when used in combination-drug therapy for indications in which the drug regimen coverage has been predicated on the inclusion of 5-FU. Consequently, NAS will allow reimbursement for Part B reimbursed components of chemotherapy regimens including either 5-FU or capecitabine in those regimens. Indicate in Item 19 on the CMS 1500 form, or the electronic equivalent, the drug being substituted.

Applies to the states of: AK, AZ, CO, HI, IA, ND, NV, OR, SD, WA & WY.

Effective Date: October 1, 2005.

Web Watch

Point and Click for our Top Web Picks



www.allaboutmds.com

This website, sponsored by Pharmion Corporation is a patient support portal for people living with MDS (Myelodysplastic Syndrome). MDS is a group of unusual diseases that affect the bone marrow and the blood.

The site contains links for treatment options and managing side effects. Patients can also find information about exercise and diet, inspiring patient stories, financial assistance and journaling. There is also a library link to a wealth of information that will help MDS patients better manage their disease.