

Addressing drug shortages for oncology use

We are closely monitoring drug shortages for oncology treatments listed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration¹ and the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists.² To help address current drug shortages for oncology, we've updated our prior authorization process to help minimize delays in care for our members. We will continue to monitor guidance provided by oncology supportive groups, such as the Society of Gynecologic Oncology³ and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).⁴

What are we doing to update the prior authorization process?

- We have identified alternative drugs that can be used instead of the drug(s) that are experiencing a shortage
- We'll require a new prior authorization if alternative medication(s) is needed. If a drug is on the shortage list and an alternative drug or regimen is supported by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN[®])⁵ guidelines for that cancer type, we'll approve the request.
- If a drug is on the shortage list and an alternative drug or regimen is not supported by the NCCN guidelines, the prior authorization request will be reviewed by an oncologist. If medically necessary, we'll approve this request for a 6-month duration during the period of drug shortage.
- You do not need to request a new prior authorization if you are extending the interval between treatment doses of the same medications (as recommended by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists⁶). However, at the end of the prior authorization period, we'll require a new request for continuation of therapy.

Medications that have a shortage	Alternative medication(s) based on cancer types*	UnitedHealthcare plans
Carboplatin	Oxaliplatin, Cisplatin	All UnitedHealthcare plans
Cisplatin	Oxaliplatin, Carboplatin	
Docetaxel	Paclitaxel, Cabazitaxel, Abraxane [®]	
Capecitabine	Xeloda [®] , Fluorouracil	
Udenyca [®]	Neulasta [®]	
Zirabev [®]	Mvasi [®]	UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage plans only



Questions?

- **For supply issues with alternative medications:** Contact the Optum Cancer Authorization program at cancerauthorizationprogram@optum.com or call **888-397-8129** (7 a.m.–7 p.m. CT)
 - If your practice is impacted by the national IV fluids shortage due to the hurricanes, we may approve certain non-preferred products that don't require further dilution as substitutes for preferred products
- **For more information on cancer prior authorization:** Email unitedoncology@uhc.com or visit UHCprovider.com > Prior Authorization > Specialty Specific Resources – Oncology > Oral and Injectable Chemotherapy and Related Cancer Therapies

¹U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Drug Shortages. Retrieved Sept. 26, 2024, from fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/drug-shortages

²American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Drug Shortages. Retrieved Sept. 26, 2024, from ashp.org/drugshortages?loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly

³Society of Gynecologic Oncology. Drug Shortage. Retrieved Sept. 26, 2024, from sgo.org/news/drugshortage/

⁴American Society of Clinical Oncology. Drug Shortages. Retrieved Sept. 26, 2024, from old-prod.asco.org/practice-patients/practice-support/drug-shortages

⁵The NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology (NCCN Guidelines®). nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/f_guidelines.asp.

⁶American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Managing Drug Product Shortages. Retrieved Sept. 26, 2024, from ashp.org/-/media/assets/policy-guidelines/docs/guidelines/managing-drug-product-shortages.ashx