

UnitedHealthcare Pharmacy
Clinical Pharmacy Programs

Program Number	2025 P 3175-3
Program	Step Therapy
Medication	Mekinist® (trametinib)
P&T Approval Date	8/2023, 8/2024, 8/2025
Effective Date	11/1/2025

1. Background:

Step therapy programs are utilized to encourage use of lower cost alternatives for certain therapeutic classes. This program requires a member to try the Zelboraf/Cotellic combination regimen before providing coverage for Tafenlar® / Mekinist® for the treatment of patients with unresectable or metastatic melanoma with a BRAF V600E or V600K mutation.

Tafenlar (dabrafenib) and Mekinist (trametinib) are indicated in combination for the treatment of patients with unresectable or metastatic melanoma with a BRAF V600E or V600K mutation, and for the treatment of patients with metastatic non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) with BRAF V600E mutation.

Zelboraf (vemurafenib) and Cotellic (cobimetinib) are indicated in combination for the treatment of patients with unresectable or metastatic melanoma with a BRAF V600E or V600K mutation.

Members currently on Tafenlar and Mekinist therapy as documented in claims history will be allowed to continue on their current therapy. Members new to therapy will be required to meet the coverage criteria below.

Coverage Information:

Members will be required to meet the criteria below for coverage. For members under the age of 19 years, the prescription will automatically process without a coverage review.

Some states mandate benefit coverage for off-label use of medications for some diagnoses or under some circumstances. Some states also mandate usage of other Compendium references. Where such mandates apply, they supersede language in the benefit document or in the notification criteria.

2. Coverage Criteria ^{a,b}:

A. Patients less than 19 years of age

1. **Mekinist** will be approved based on the following criterion:

- a. Member is less than 19 years of age

Authorization will be issued for 12 months.

B. Unresectable or Metastatic Melanoma

1. **Mekinist** will be approved based on **both** of the following criteria:

- a. Mekinist is to be used in combination with Tafinlar (dabrafenib)

-AND-

b. **One** of the following:

- (1) Patient has a contraindication, or history of intolerance to Zelboraf (vemurafenib) plus Cotellic (cobimetinib)

-OR-

- (2) Provider attests that the patient is not an appropriate candidate based on the patient's clinical status or comorbidities for Zelboraf (vemurafenib) plus Cotellic (cobimetinib)

-OR-

(3) **Both** of the following:

- (a) As continuation of therapy

-AND-

- (b) Patient has **not** received a manufacturer supplied sample at no cost from a prescriber's office, or any form of assistance from the Novartis Oncology sponsored Co-Pay Savings Program (e.g., sample card which can be redeemed at a pharmacy for a free supply of medication) or a 30-day free trial from a pharmacy as a means to establish as a current user of Mekinist

*Patients requesting initial authorization who were established on therapy via the receipt of a manufacturer supplied sample at no cost in the prescriber's office or any form of assistance from the Novartis Oncology sponsored Co-Pay Savings Program **shall be required** to meet initial authorization criteria as if patient were new to therapy.

Authorization will be issued for 12 months.

C. Other Indications

1. **Mekinist** will be approved

Authorization will be issued for 12 months.

^a State mandates may apply. Any federal regulatory requirements and the member specific benefit plan coverage may also impact coverage criteria. Other policies and utilization management programs may apply.

^b Coverage of oncology medications may be approved based on state mandates.

3. Additional Clinical Rules:

- Notwithstanding Coverage Criteria, UnitedHealthcare may approve initial and re-authorization based solely on previous claim/medication history, diagnosis codes (ICD-10) and/or claim logic. Use of automated approval and re-approval processes varies by program and/or therapeutic class.
- Supply limits and/or Notification may be in place.
- Coverage of oncology medications may be approved based on state mandates.

4. References:

1. Zelboraf [package insert]. South San Francisco, CA: Genentech, Inc.; May 2020.
2. Cotellic [package insert]. Genentech USA, Inc.: South San Francisco, CA; May 2023.
3. Tafenlar [package insert]. East Hanover, NJ: Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation; April 2025.
4. Mekinist [package insert]. East Hanover, NJ: Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation; April 2025.
5. The NCCN Drugs and Biologics Compendium (NCCN Compendium™). Available at https://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/pdf/cutaneous_melanoma.pdf. Accessed July 2, 2025.

Program	Step Therapy - Mekinist® (trametinib)
Change Control	
8/2023	New program
8/2024	Annual review. No changes to clinical criteria. Updated background and references.
8/2025	Annual review. Updated section on melanoma by specifying “unresectable or metastatic”. Updated references.