



# Pharmacy update

Ontario edition

JUNE 2023

## ONTARIO BIOSIMILAR SWITCH POLICY

On December 20, 2022, the Ontario government [announced](#) a mandatory biosimilar switch policy to further promote the use of biosimilars funded through the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program. Under this new policy, Ontarians receiving coverage under the ODB program for Copaxone<sup>®</sup>, Enbrel<sup>®</sup>, Humalog<sup>®</sup>, Humira<sup>®</sup>, Lantus<sup>®</sup>, NovoRapid<sup>®</sup>, Remicade<sup>®</sup>, and Rituxan<sup>®</sup>, will be required to transition to the biosimilar version by December 28, 2023.

### What does this mean for GreenShield plan members in Ontario?

All GreenShield plan members in Ontario taking an impacted drug **and coordinating** with the ODB program will be required to transition to a corresponding biosimilar in accordance with our provincial coordination policies. GreenShield issued letters to affected plan members near the end of May (except for those on insulins which will follow at a later date) advising them to discuss a transition to the biosimilar with their physician before their applicable deadline. After the transition period, to ensure ongoing coordination of claims, GreenShield will reimburse claims only for the biosimilar products unless an exception applies.

If a patient has a medical reason for not switching to a biosimilar, their prescriber may request an exemption through the EAP, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If the EAP grants an exception to allow a plan member to remain on the originator, GreenShield will follow suit and pay for the originator to enable continued coordination of claims. If the EAP denies the exceptional coverage request, so will GreenShield.

As a reminder, the Ministry of Health is seeking support from pharmacists in the implementation of this policy. Pharmacists may claim a Biosimilar Support Fee of \$15 through the Health Network System (HNS) when filling the first prescription for a biosimilar included in the biosimilars policy for a transitioning ODB recipient. Please visit the OHIP INFOBulletins ([230302](#)) for additional details on the biosimilar switch policy including submission of the Biosimilar Support Fee claim.

## DIRECT BILLING FOR LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE (LHSC) PLAN MEMBERS

Effective May 1, 2023, **all** pharmacies can directly bill prescriptions for LHSC plan members with GreenShield benefits. Previously claims for prescriptions filled outside of the LHSC pharmacy had to be submitted manually for reimbursement.

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