

Drug Formulary

User's Guide



The information contained in this document lists formulary as well as non-formulary drugs used in the treatment of cancer. The drugs listed as non-formulary are not approved for funding by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. Formulary drugs, where funding is restricted to specific criteria for use, may be considered as non-formulary for clinical indications outside the approved criteria. A special formulary listing which provides funding for new and emerging anti-cancer drugs or indications may be granted through the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency Treatment Evaluation Program (STEP) (see Section II). Funding approval for a non-formulary drug or non-approved indication for a specific clinical circumstance may be considered in some cases through Exceptional Drug Coverage (EDC) (see Section IV).

Formulary drugs for the treatment of registered cancer patients are not listed on the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan (SPDP). However, many supportive drugs used by cancer patients (e.g. anti-infectives, anti-thrombotic agents, medications for pain management, etc.) are listed by the SPDP and are not provided by the Cancer Agency

I. Authorized Physicians

Medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, pediatric oncologists, and hematologists employed by the Cancer Agency are authorized to prescribe formulary drugs for registered cancer patients, hereafter referred to as authorized Cancer Agency physicians.

Physicians employed by the Cancer Agency as clinical associates may be given authority to prescribe specific formulary drugs for cancer patients by their supervising site leaders. Clinical associates are limited to prescribing drugs that are a continuation of treatment initiated by an authorized Cancer Agency physician.

Non-Cancer Agency physicians practicing in specific medical specialties, hereafter referred to as associated prescribing physicians, may be granted the authority to prescribe certain formulary drugs to registered cancer patients. The majority of these include:

- Surgical gynecology oncologists for the treatment of gynecologic cancers
- Urologists for the treatment of prostate cancer and superficial bladder cancer
- Hematologists for the treatment of malignant lymphomas, leukemias and myelodysplastic conditions
- Dermatologists for the treatment of cutaneous lymphomas
- Ophthalmologists for the topical treatment of eyelid, conjunctival and corneal neoplasms

Only authorized Cancer Agency physicians and associated prescribing physicians may initiate cancer treatment with formulary drugs for Agency funding. The indications for drug funding are applicable in both the inpatient (except as noted in Section VI) and outpatient settings.

Family physicians or surgeons may prescribe specific cancer medications (e.g. adjuvant hormonal therapies for breast cancer) through the cancer centre pharmacies when directed by the treating cancer physician at the time a patient is discharged from the cancer centre back to their primary physician provider for follow-up and continuation of their cancer drug treatment.

II. Saskatchewan Cancer Agency Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee, with membership from medical, pharmacy and nursing departments, governs all policies of drug use within the Cancer Agency and is responsible for making recommendations for listing of all cancer drug programs on the Cancer Agency Drug Formulary. The P&T Committee aligns with the pan-Canadian Oncology Drug Review (pCODR) program and accepts their comprehensive reviews and recommendations for provincial reimbursement for new oncology drugs and indications. Funding for cancer drugs is provided by the Ministry of Health.

The P&T Committee considers and makes decisions on special formulary listing for new and emerging drug treatments through a program called STEP (Saskatchewan Cancer Agency Treatment Evaluation Program). This program allows for an evaluation phase of a new drug program focusing on how the drug is used in the patient population, what therapeutic outcomes were observed and the

actual cost impact. The P&T Committee also reviews and makes decisions on requests for Exceptional Drug Coverage (EDC) (see Section III).

In general, the eligibility requirements for drugs listed on the Cancer Agency Drug Formulary represent the approved standard of care treatment guidelines for the Agency.

III. Exceptional Drug Coverage (EDC)

An authorized Cancer Agency physician or associate prescribing physician may request funding for use of a drug or indication which is non-formulary. In these situations, the request must be documented on the Exceptional Drug Coverage Request Form and submitted to the P&T Committee or designated representative for consideration. In all cases, the request must include the clinical reason for the request, scientific evidence for benefit, the patient's clinical history and prior cancer treatment(s), reasonable therapeutic alternatives, and estimated total treatment cost. In addition, an annual provincial estimate of the number of similar cases may be required.

Drugs and/or clinical indications which represent major changes in the funded standard of care cannot be requested through Exceptional Drug Coverage. A physician may make a request to the P&T Committee to review a new drug program for consideration of funding and Drug Formulary listing provided the new drug or indication will not receive a national pCODR recommendation.

IV. Cancer Centre Pharmacies

Provision of cancer drugs on an outpatient basis according to the list of drugs and indications on the Drug Formulary is the responsibility of the pharmacies located in the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and the Saskatoon Cancer Centre (see below). This includes the dispensing of cancer drugs for administration in the outpatient chemotherapy treatment units of the tertiary cancer centres, to cancer patients for administration at home and to the Community Oncology Program of Saskatchewan (COPS) centres.

All outpatient prescriptions for formulary cancer drugs from authorized prescribers must be dispensed by a Cancer Centre Pharmacy. The Cancer Agency does not reimburse community (retail) pharmacies for the dispensing of cancer formulary drugs. Patients who purchase their cancer formulary drugs from a community (retail) pharmacy will only be reimbursed at the formulary cost of the Cancer Agency.

Allan Blair Cancer Centre Pharmacy
4101 Dewdney Avenue
Regina SK S4T 7T1
Tel: (306) 766-2816 Fax: (306) 766-2183

Saskatoon Cancer Centre Pharmacy
20 Campus Drive
Saskatoon SK S7N 4H4
Tel: (306) 655-2680 Fax: (306) 655-1035

V. Cancer Drugs in the Hospital

In general, injectable cancer drug treatments and initiation of new oral cancer treatments prescribed for inpatients by an authorized physician that meet the Drug Formulary criteria are funded, prepared and provided from the Cancer Agency pharmacies. Supportive therapies used in cancer patients (e.g. Ondansetron, Pamidronate, Zoledronic acid) are not funded for inpatient use. In addition, patients admitted to hospital receiving chronic oral cancer treatments that are continued during hospital admission are not separately funded by the Cancer Agency, where the hospital may choose to use the patient's own supply which was provided on an outpatient basis by the Cancer Agency or assume financial responsibility for providing the oral therapy within their own drug distribution system.

Injectable cancer drug treatments given in community hospitals outside Saskatoon and Regina are provided by the cancer centre pharmacies under the auspices of the Community Oncology Program of Saskatchewan and are administered on an outpatient basis in these community sites.

VI. Blood and Marrow Transplant (BMT) Program

Drug treatment protocols developed within the Provincial Blood and Marrow Transplant Program must be approved for funding by the P&T Committee. Formulary drugs with restricted criteria must list the transplant indications approved for use within the Blood and Marrow Transplant Program.

VII. Pediatric Oncology

Childhood cancers are treated according to study protocols from the Children's Oncology Group (COG). The Drug Formulary does not include most pediatric specific indications. However, COG protocols which require use of formulary drugs listed with restricted criteria or use of non-formulary drugs must be reviewed by the P&T Committee regarding potential impact on drug use and cost and require a decision on funding approval before patient enrollment on the study.

A request to use a non-formulary drug or indication in order to follow a COG protocol for a child's treatment must be requested by completing an Exceptional Drug Coverage Request Form and submitting to the P&T Committee. This includes situations where Cancer Agency funding had been approved for a non-formulary drug specific to enrollment on the COG protocol or where the non-formulary drug would have been provided free of charge by the study if the patient was enrolled.

VIII. Clinical Trials

Drugs used within clinical trials may be outside the listed indications on the Drug Formulary. Prior to initiation, all clinical trials require a review by the P&T Committee regarding impact on drug use and cost, both for the study drug regimen and the 'standard' comparator regimen. The review will also include the impact on drug use and cost of supportive drug treatments funded by the Cancer Agency and how clinical trial participation affects subsequent treatments following completion of the study or at the time of disease progression. If the outcome of the review identifies excessive drug costs, the clinical trial may not be supported unless outside funding is acquired.

IX. Out-of-Province Drug Benefits

Reimbursement for the cost of 'take home' drugs provided to Saskatchewan cancer patients receiving cancer care in another province or territory will follow the Drug Formulary. Use of drugs not on the Drug Formulary or for a non-approved indication will not be funded by the Cancer Agency and will not be reimbursed, nor provided to a cancer outreach facility. In order for reimbursement of 'take home' drug costs to an out of province health organization or to the patient, the Cancer Agency requires patient registration and current clinical progress information regarding the treatment plan and outcome. Cancer drug treatments administered by a health organization (hospital or cancer treatment centre) are generally billed to the Province of Saskatchewan through interprovincial billing agreements.

X. Out-of-Country Elective Drug Benefits

Coverage for out-of-country cancer drug treatment is only considered in exceptional circumstances and under certain conditions, and the referring specialist physician must request and receive prior approval from the Cancer Agency and Medical Services Branch of the Ministry of Health prior to seeking drug treatment outside of Canada. Patients who elect to seek drug treatment or alternative opinions outside of Canada on their own will not be eligible for reimbursement of out of pocket drug expenses, and cancer treatment drugs recommended by specialists outside of Canada can only be considered if the recommended medications are currently funded by the Cancer Agency according to the criteria listed in the Drug Formulary and prescribed by an authorized Cancer Agency physician.

Further information on out-of-country medical coverage can be found at:
www.health.gov.sk.ca/out-of-province.

XI. Premedications/Wardstock Items

Miscellaneous drug products administered to patients within the Allan Blair Cancer Centre and Saskatoon Cancer Centre to support cancer drug treatments or procedures are not listed within the Drug Formulary, but are provided at no cost to the patient.

XII. Drug Abbreviations

The Drug Formulary includes the most common drug abbreviations, however, use of drug abbreviations for prescribing is not allowed according to Cancer Agency policy.

XIII. Supply of Cancer Drugs for Self-Administration

In general, patients are provided with a supply of cancer drugs for self-administration (e.g. oral drugs) that is limited to what is safe and appropriate, taking into account the type of medication, requirements for standard monitoring and follow-up, the type of cancer being treated, the general status and treatment history of the patient and the cost of the drug. For patients who will be absent from the province of Saskatchewan for an extended period of time, and not able to attend regular review and follow-up appointments with their physician during that time, an extended supply of some cancer drugs may be provided according to Cancer Agency policy.

Disclaimer:

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency Drug Formulary is an **information-only** resource that identifies the funding status of cancer treatment drugs and some supportive drugs used to care for cancer patients in Saskatchewan. This information is intended to be for informational purposes only and is current as of the date listed on the Drug Formulary. It is not intended to constitute medical advice.