Committee to Evaluate Drugs (CED)

Recommendations and Reasons

Document Posted: May 2015

Epoprostenol

Product: Epoprostenol (Caripul®)

Class of Drugs: peripheral vasodilator

Reason for Use: pulmonary hypertension

Manufacturer: Actelion Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc.

Date of Review: September 11, 2013

CED Recommendation

The CED recommended that epoprostenol (Caripul®) be funded for the treatment of pulmonary hypertension according to specific criteria. Caripul® is pharmacologically and therapeutically equivalent to an existing alternative treatment and may provide added patient convenience.

Executive Officer Decision*

Based on the CED's recommendation and an agreement with the manufacturer, the Executive Officer decided to fund epoprostenol (Caripul®) through the Ontario Drug Benefit's (ODB) Exceptional Access Program according to specific criteria.

Funding Status*

Funded through the ODB's Exceptional Access Program (EAP) according to specific criteria.

(EAP criteria can be found at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/eap_criteria.aspx)

* *This information is current as of the posting date of the document. For the most up-to-date information on Executive Officer decision and funding status, see: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/status_single_source_subm.aspx.*

Ontario

Highlights of Recommendation:

- Epoprostenol is an intravenous drug used to treat pulmonary hypertension. Caripul® is a new formulation of epoprostenol. An older formulation of epoprostenol, made by another manufacturer, is currently funded through the ODB's Exceptional Access Program.
- Study AC-066-102 showed that Caripul® is equivalent to the existing epoprostenol product, meaning that both formulations of epoprostenol act in a similar manner when tested in healthy male subjects.
- The EPITOME-2 study showed there were no clinically important changes over three months in patients who were switched from the older formulation of epoprostenol to Caripul®.
- The CED noted that Caripul® provides improved stability and patient convenience compared to the existing epoprostenol product, allowing patients to prepare up to eight days' worth of medication in advance and eliminating the need to carry ice packs during chronic administration.
- The proposed drug benefit prices for Caripul® are $17.1760 and $34.4470 for the 0.5mg/vial and 1.5mg/vial, respectively, which are cheaper than the current drug benefit prices for the alternative epoprostenol product.
- Overall, the CED noted that Caripul® is equivalent to the older epoprostenol product. The improved stability of Caripul® makes its use more convenient for patients. Caripul® is also available at a lower cost than the existing epoprostenol product.

Background:

Pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) is a severe, progressive disease. In patients with NYHA functional Class IV disease, lack of appropriate treatment can be immediately life-threatening.

Epoprostenol, also known as prostacyclin, PGI2 or PGX, is a naturally occurring prostaglandin. It has two major pharmacological actions: (1) it widens narrowed blood vessels in the lung and other parts of the body, and (2) it inhibits platelet clumping.

Detailed Discussions:

- The CED evaluated two studies that specifically included the Caripul® formulation of epoprostenol: Study AC-066-102 (a pharmacokinetic/pharmacodynamic study) and the clinical study EPITOME-2. Study AC-066-102 showed that Caripul® is equivalent to the existing epoprostenol product. The EPITOME-2 study showed there were no clinically important changes over three months in patients who were switched from the existing formulation of epoprostenol to Caripul®.
- The CED noted there is a lack of high-quality clinical trial data that specifically evaluated the efficacy of the Caripul® product. Evidence supporting Caripul® is mainly comprised of published literature of the older epoprostenol formulation and studies to suggest that the two epoprostenol products are comparable. There are no randomized studies evaluating the comparative effectiveness of Caripul® and the older epoprostenol formulation.
- The CED agreed that Caripul® provides improved stability and convenience compared to the existing epoprostenol product, allowing patients to prepare up to eight days' worth of

medication in advance and eliminating the need to carry ice packs during chronic administration.

- The proposed drug benefit prices for Caripul® are $17.1760 and $34.4470 for the 0.5mg/vial and 1.5mg/vial, respectively, which are cheaper than the current drug benefit prices for the alternative epoprostenol product.
- Overall, the CED noted that Caripul® is equivalent to the existing epoprostenol product. The improved stability of Caripul® makes its use more convenient. Caripul® also appears to be less expensive than the older epoprostenol product.

Committee to Evaluate Drugs (CED)

The Committee to Evaluate Drugs (CED) is comprised of practicing physicians, pharmacists, health economics experts, and patient representatives. In conducting its review, the CED considers data contained in the drug manufacturer's submission, input provided by patient groups, findings from the national Common Drug Review and the pan-Canadian Oncology Drug Review, and other scientific information as necessary.

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