CAREMARK TrendsRx® Alert

What's new...What's next...What to do now JULY 2004

Caduet® (amlodipine besylate/atorvastatin calcium)

NEW DRUG APPROVAL

Caduet® (amlodipine besylate/atorvastatin calcium, Pfizer) was approved in February 2004 by the United States (U.S.) Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Caduet is the first combination medicine that contains both a blood pressure and a cholesterol lowering agent. The amlodipine (Norvasc®) component is in a class of medicines called calcium channel blockers, which widens the blood vessels, making it easier for the heart to work. Atorvastatin (Lipitor®), the second component, blocks the production of cholesterol in the body and is in the class of medicines frequently called statins. Side effects seen with Caduet are similar to those seen in persons taking amlodipine and atorvastatin alone. This includes fatigue or tiredness, headache, insomnia, swelling, and upset stomach or flatulence. Due to the atorvastatin component, users should be warned of liver problems and muscle breakdown and should report any cases of unexplained muscle pain or weakness to their doctor. As with persons taking atorvastatin and amlodipine, Caduet is dosed once a day. The starting dose of Caduet is based on the recommended therapy of each component. It is available in eight different dosing combinations using the 5 mg or 10 mg strength of amlodipine and the 10, 20, 40 or 80 mg strength of atorvastatin. The average wholesale price (AWP) for a 30-day supply is approximately $108.00 for combinations using the 10 mg strength of atorvastatin, and approximately $147.75 for combinations using the 20, 40 or 80 mg strengths of atorvastatin. These prices are lower than the AWP of both of Caduet's components combined. In fact, cost of therapy will decrease by $130 to $390 per year for plan participants who switch from Norvasc and Lipitor to Caduet.

BACKGROUND

High blood pressure and high cholesterol are the two leading risk factors for heart disease, which is the leading cause of death worldwide. Approximately 30 million people in the U.S. have both conditions; however, less than 10 percent have reached their target blood pressure or cholesterol goal. In addition, 60 percent of all cardiovascular events occur in those who have both diseases. According to recent guidelines issued by the National Cholesterol Education Program, doctors are encouraged to treat patients who have both conditions since their risk of a heart attack or stroke is greater than those who only have one.

CAREMARK RESPONSE

Based on currently available data, Caremark recommends considering coverage of Caduet under your prescription benefit.

Caduet is available through both mail service and retail channels.

Caduet would appear to provide a compliance advantage over amlodipine and atorvastatin alone due to its combined formulation. Caremark will add Caduet to its compliance dosing interventions for plan participants already on the individual drugs, and will continue to monitor its utilization to determine if any additional clinical programs are needed.

CONTACT

For more information call your Caremark account representative.

Please Note: This document provides a brief overview of the subject. Please refer to the manufacturer's full prescribing information for a complete discussion of the product. This review is provided as a reference only, and is based in part on information derived from third parties.

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