

## Stelara biosimilars (Ustekinumab)

We are always working to ensure that our insureds have access to the most cost-effective treatments possible. Accordingly, we are no longer covering the reference biologic drug Stelara. Instead, we are covering its less expensive biosimilar versions.

**Plan members residing outside of Quebec:** we are covering the following biosimilar only:

- Wezlana (Ustekinumab)

**Plan members residing in Quebec:** all biosimilars listed on the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) list of medications (the provincial drug formulary) are covered as prior authorization drugs, in accordance with the RAMQ's minimum requirements.

Regardless of which province you reside in, **you have to submit a prior authorization request form** for Stelara biosimilars.

However, you will have to provide us with the notice of acceptance or refusal\* from the other insurer if either of the following applies:

- You are covered by another private drug insurance plan that acts as first payer. If you want to know what order to submit your claims in, please refer to the page [Order of claim submission when coordinating with another group plan](#).
- You are covered by a public drug insurance plan (e.g., Pharmacare for British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents).

\* Please return the notice to us through our secure site at [www.DesjardinsLifeInsurance.com/Send](http://www.DesjardinsLifeInsurance.com/Send) by selecting Prior authorization drugs when asked for the type of claim document. You can also return it by fax to 1-877-838-2134.

Please take note that if your public drug insurance plan or your other private plan (first payer) has approved any Stelara biosimilar and you've already started treatment, we will cover it as well.

Finally, please be sure to keep any documentation that may be required to support your claims (approvals, pharmacy receipts, etc.). You may be asked to submit such documents as part of a randomized audit.

If you have any questions, please call our Customer Contact Centre toll-free, at 1-844-410-6485.

## DEFINITIONS

**Biologic drug:** A drug made using living microorganisms (e.g., yeast or animal cells) instead of chemical substances. The composition of biologics is far more complex than chemically synthesized pharmaceuticals and they are much more difficult to produce. Examples of biologics include insulin, vaccines and blood components.

**Reference biologic drug:** The original biologic to which the biosimilar is compared.

**Biosimilar drug:** A highly similar copy of a biologic drug. Once the patent of a reference biologic drug expires, other manufacturers may produce biosimilar versions. Since biosimilars are developed based on the work done to develop the corresponding reference biologic, they cost less to produce, offer comparable efficacy and safety, and result in significant cost savings.

More information on biologics and biosimilars can be found on the Health Canada website by typing *Biosimilar biologic drugs in Canada: Fact Sheet* in the search tool.